Chamber backs 18-month delay in proposed minimum wage hike. PAGE 2
MBI assures Ox & Palm products in the CNMI are safe to eat. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 45

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More vaccines expected today

GARAPAN MAKEOVER
A worker repaints the parallel parking markers along Hotel Street last Feb. 24, 2021, as part of the Garapan Revitalization Task Force's cleanup work in Garapan. The task force, together with other public and private partners water-blasted the streets and repainted the parking markers to prepare for the rerouting of roads that will see new one-way streets in the area.
BEA CABRERA

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI expects to receive a shipment of over 13,000 COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Inc. today, according to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña.

See MORE on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE
As of 8pm, March 4, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,745	2	7,747
Recovered	7,583	7	7,590
Active	24	2	26
Deaths	131	0	131
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			129,149

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	144	0	144
Traced via Travel Screening	118	0	118
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			198

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 10,141	Dose 1: 523	Dose 1: 745
Dose 2: 7,776	Dose 2: 137	Dose 2: 258

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

'Non-citizens must have legal status to avail of PUA'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

With the CNMI Department of Labor resuming the second round of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente is reminding non-U.S. citizen applicants that they have to have legal immigration status to be eligible for unemployment aid.

This includes CNMI-Only Transitional Workers, more commonly known as CW-1 workers; federal H-2B workers; employment authorization document holders (C-11) on

See PUA on Page 4

'Govt has less than 30 days to act on $7.7M for Lost Wages Assistance'

» **Guerrero says he will make final push to get answers from FEMA on waiver request**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Patrick Guerrero, the governor's authorized representative, will make a final push this week to get an answer from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the

See GOVT on Page 4

CUC board adopts Integrated Resource Plan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors adopted yesterday CUC's Integrated Resource Plan, which is a comprehensive decision-support mechanism that creates a long-term roadmap using financial modeling and technical analysis to determine the best options for supplying electricity over the long run at the least possible cost on Saipan and Rota.

See CUC on Page 4

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board chair Miranda Manglona presides over a special meeting yesterday afternoon at CUC's conference room at the Joeten Dandan Building. The board approved the request of CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho to adopt the CUC Integrated Resource Plan.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

INSIDE

BUSINESS
New Shin Restaurant is cooking up a storm of traditional breakfast Chinese fare.
PAGE 13

NATION
House Democrats passed voting and ethics legislation over Republican opposition.
PAGE 14

OFF THE WALL
A cat that went astray about 15 years ago has been reunited with its owner.
PAGE 17

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Local

Chamber backs 18-month delay in proposed minimum wage hike

By BEA CABRERA
Beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce supports Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) position to delay by 18 months the implementation of the Raise the Wage Act of 2021, which proposes a minimum wage hike in the Northern Marianas.

This proposed federal wage increase in the U.S. mainland includes the CNMI and is one of the provisions written in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which talks about a $1.9-trillion economic stimulus package unveiled by President Joe Biden. The plan calls for an incremental minimum wage increase to $9.50 per hour, adding $1.50 per hour to the minimum wage every year until it reaches $15 in 2025.

In a letter to Sablan, Chamber president Joe C. Guerrero said the proposed legislation needs to be studied first by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

"This study is to determine the feasibility of a Northern Marianas minimum wage increase and to explore sustainable wage policies for our remote and unique island economy, which is markedly different compared to that of the mainland United States," he said.

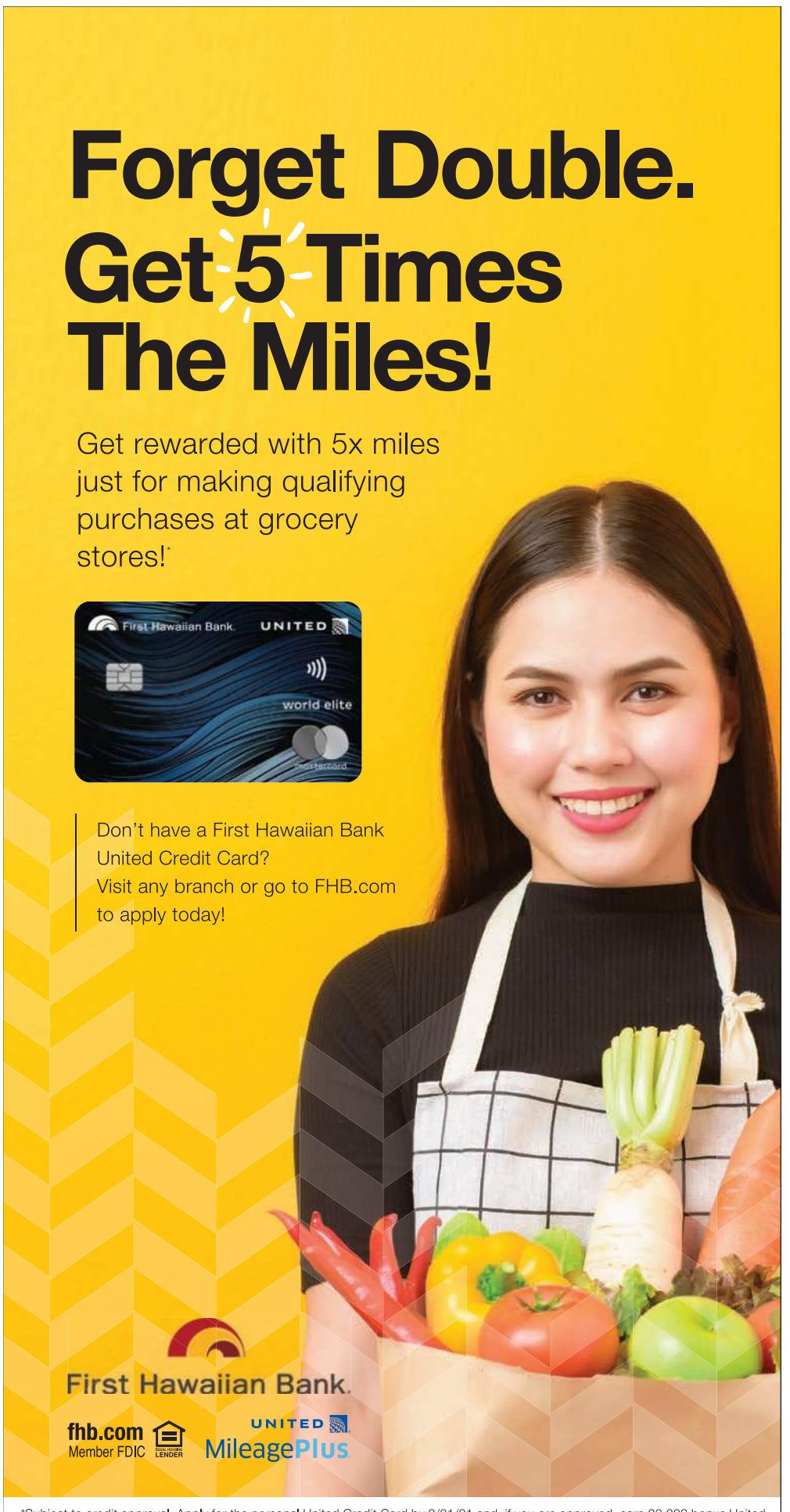
Guerrero

"With the unfortunate and devastating economic effects of the recent typhoons Soudelor and Mangkhut, Super Typhoon Yutu, the downturn in tourism and now the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no better time than now to cautiously approach wage policies that would hinder our gradual and long-term recovery efforts," he added.

Guerrero expressed the concerns of Chamber members that the wage hike will harm the operations of many businesses. "Since the Raise the Wage Act of 2021 was introduced, our members have reported that if wages were increased as proposed, they would have few immediate options other than to reduce work hours, lay off personnel, or even close their business. A majority of businesses in the CNMI are unable to absorb major shifts in personnel costs on top of the expected price increases from their suppliers and vendors as a result of such a minimum wage increase," he said.

"Similar to the GAO minimum wage studies and reports conducted in American Samoa in 2016 and 2020, we trust that an independent nonpartisan examination of the Northern Marianas' economy, gross domestic product per capita, unemployment rate, wages and other indicators would lead us toward a sound policy on minimum wage," he added.

Meanwhile, the Chamber jumpstarts the 2021 Prevailing Wage Survey starting this month. The survey is done annually to determine the wage rate of majority of workers under different job classifications in the CNMI.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MBI assures all Ox & Palm products in the CNMI are safe for consumption

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

Micronesian Brokers (CNMI) Inc. has assured that all Ox & Palm products in the CNMI are safe for consumption, despite a recent recall issued by the U.S. Department of Public Health and Social Services on certain Ox & Palm canned products.

In a letter it released to the public, Micronesian Brokers CNMI said it does not deal with Milky Way International Trading Corp. or MW Polar, which is the company subject to the recall.

Last Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Public Health and Social Services announced the recall of 297,715 lbs of Ox & Palm canned products that MW Polar from Norwalk, California distributed in the United States. The recall was due to the lack of Food Safety Inspection Service import reinspection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"…Micronesia Brokers Inc. imports Ox & Palm directly from Heinz, Australia. All products are inspected by USDA inspector and each case has a USDA inspection stamp. MBI's Ox & Palm are not part of any USDA recall and are safe for consumption," said Dennis Yoshimoto, general manager Micronesia Brokers (CNMI) Inc.

The MBI letter was co-signed by USDA supervisor Dr. Paul Pomes.

This assurance was echoed by Priscilla Rusa, head of exports of Kraft Heinz Australia: "We wish to make it clear that this recall only covers products by MW Polar that were shipped into MW Polar's warehouses in the United States. All Ox & Palm products that were not imported by MW Polar—including the products you [MBI] distribute—are not affected by this issue and can be sold to your consumers in your jurisdiction as before," she said in a letter yesterday. "…We would like to re-iterate that Ox & Palm products are of high quality and perfectly fit for consumption. All products that have followed the standard FSIS inspection process into the U.S. or have been imported into other jurisdictions can be sold to consumers without concern."

According to Yoshimoto, MBI's Ox & Palm are all inspected by the CNMI USDA Inspector. Each case has a USDA marking with the Inspection Facility Number stamped on every case.

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Finance reasserts tax lien on IPI assets

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Division of Revenue and Taxation of the Department of Finance has reasserted with the U.S. District Court for the NMI its tax lien on the assets of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC, as it takes up the U.S. Department of Labor receivership case against IPI today.

Finance, through their counsel, Dustin D. Rollins, said the Commonwealth's tax lien has priority. This means that before IPI can pay its dues and other obligations, they must prioritize the Commonwealth's tax lien before anything else.

Rollins said the purpose of submitting notices of a tax lien in favor of the Commonwealth to all property and rights to property, whether real or personal, belonging to IPI means that the CNMI will take all actions necessary to protect those rights.

Finance filed the tax lien against IPI in federal court last August 2020 for allegedly failing to pay $9,416,887 in Business Gross Revenue Tax for the tax period in 2017 to 2019. At the time, Richard Santos, Revenue and Taxation Collection & Remittance branch manager, said that this liability remained unpaid despite a demand for payment.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, for the tax period that ended on Dec. 31, 2017, the unpaid balance is $3,289,333. For the tax period that ended on Dec. 31, 2018, the unpaid balance is $2,064,036. For the tax period that ended on Dec. 31, 2019, the unpaid balance is $2,013,024 and $2,050,462. For the tax period that ended on April 6, 2020, plus a returned check penalty in the amount $25.

CUC

From Page 1

The CUC board directors adopted without discussion the Integrated Resource Plan after hearing the presentation of CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho and CUC engineer Yvonne Ogumoro. CUC first developed the plan in 2014.

Camacho, who requested for the special meeting, said in a later interview that, although the Integrated Resource Plan is already outdated, they need the board to adopt it as there are a lot of items that they are currently doing in preparation for a need to have a new power plant.

"Again, this is an opinion, this is a study, a determination for the production program on Saipan and Rota," he said. Part of that is recognizing the age of CUC's power equipment and start with changing the plan to prepare for a new power plant, he said, adding that the goal is to address the aged facility and to incorporate the newest technologies possible.

Camacho said they do have a $600,000 funding for an updated version of the study as an Integrated Resource Plan's lifespan is only three to five years.

However, he said, the board's adoption of the old plan is essential in moving forward because they are already doing a good number of the items recommended on it.

"We have been following the document and getting an update, then we'll recognize the available and the different types of technology available and identify what's best for this part of the world at this time," Camacho said.

He said they want to continue to have these studies and review to ensure that they acquire the latest technology and the most appropriate and efficient and effective equipment for the CNMI's power supply moving forward.

Camacho said the Department of the Interior funded the old study for $500,000, and they expect to get $600,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing Urban Development, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corp., for the new study.

"So, I just want to make it clear that we're following that document accordingly. And when the new document is out, then we are [going to] incorporate those," he said.

This Integrated Resource Plan, Camacho said, tells CUC to prepare the diesel power plant with 10 megawatts of solar.

Camacho said it is imperative that the board review and consider this Integrated Resource Plan as CUC already has been doing a good number of the things that's part of this study.

"We have to do it in order to ensure that we have a viable power supply moving forward," he said.

In her PowerPoint presentation, Ogumoro said they started this plan with then-CUC executive director Alan Fletcher in 2014 when she was with the Water and Wastewater engineering.

Using a federal grant, CUC hired Leidos Engineering LLC through a competitive bid process, and the National Renewable Energy Lab was also consulted to create the plan, Ogumoro said.

PUA

From Page 1

parole, etc.

Those who have no valid immigration status and aren't able to work in the CNMI will not be eligible, Benavente said.

It was also learned that these non-U.S. citizen applicants must be on island and have a legal status in order to avail of the program.

"The CWs can apply for the time that they were on the island, but not for the time that they're off-island. Also, their work status must be valid at the time of their application," said Benavente in a text message.

This means that if they were here from Dec. 27, 2020, to Feb. 1, 2021, the applicant can apply for those weeks. However, if they were off-island from Feb. 2 through March 13, they won't be able to file for those weeks.

This also means those who were separated from their company but are off-island won't be able to avail of the program.

According to Benavente, non-U.S. citizens who are awaiting status and has a receipt as proof that they are waiting for their status, might qualify. However, that it is still a case-by-case scenario, she said.

According to the PUA/FPUC handbook, before non-U.S. citizens can get their PUA benefits, their status will have to be verified first. It was learned that applicants will be able to receive a lump sum retroactive payment.

Benavente said those who are denied benefits can appeal and they are welcome to appeal the denial.

As per the PUA/FPUC handbook, if an applicant is denied benefits and disagrees with the "notice of decision on PUA claim," the applicant can request for a reconsideration, or file an appeal, to DOL by submitting a "request for reconsideration and/or appeal" form, while also providing documents.

According to the handbook, reconsideration means that the PUA adjudicator will review its prior determination and consider any new information. Requests for reconsideration should be submitted to the DOL's Division of Employment Services within 10 calendar days after the determination or redetermination was mailed to the applicant.

The handbook said that if an individual requests for consideration, the PUA adjudicator will issue a redetermination based on the applicable law and available evidence. If an applicant still disagrees, they can proceed with an appeal.

Requests for reconsiderations can be dropped off in person at building #1334, Ascension Drive or delivered by mail to the Division of Employment Service, P.O. Box 10007, Saipan MP 96950.

MORE

From Page 1

The shipment, totaling 13,360 vials, includes the 9,360 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 4,000 Moderna Inc. vaccines.

As of March 4, 15% of the CNMI's population has already received their second doses. Muña said that CHCC expects to see an increase in these numbers as they continue to vaccinate those on their second doses.

With 13,360 vaccines that are coming in, approximately half of that would be reserved for second doses. This is intended to avoid any future problems for those who need their second doses, in case of any potential delays in the shipment of vaccines to the CNMI. As shown in the recent case of Guam, it was reported that 7,000 people were awaiting their second doses. According to media reports, Guam's COVID-19 vaccines ran out last Friday before 7,000 individuals could get their second vaccination dose this week.

The Joint Information Center in Guam recently announced that vaccinations are to resume next week. Guam is expected to also receive their new vaccine allocation this week.

JIC said that with this allocation, Guam will only administer doses to those who are due for their second dose. JIC assured the postponed second dose appointments won't affect the effectiveness of the vaccine, and individuals won't be required to restart the two-dose vaccine series.

JIC said the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention said that if it is not possible to administer the second dose within 21 (Pfizer) or 28 (Moderna) days, then the vaccine can be administered up to six weeks, or 42 days, after the first dose.

GOVT

From Page 1

CNMI's request for a waiver on the 25% matching fund requirement of the $7.7 million that was approved for the Lost Wages Assistance program.

Speaking at the House's Committee on Health and Welfare meeting last Friday, Guerrero said the latest communication he got was last Jan. 6, which is an official letter from Robert Fenton, regional administrator of FEMA Region 9, acknowledging the receipt of their Sept. 10 letter that asked for the waiver. Guerrero said he actually wrote that letter to FEMA and that Fenton had replied that the CNMI's request is being processed and that he'll (Guerrero) be notified once a decision is made.

Lost Wages Assistance Program grants come from FEMA and the intended beneficiaries are workers who have been unemployed or are working few hours due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. The CNMI was approved for $7.7 million last Sept. 16, 2020, for this purpose but it came with a 25% cost share requirement.

"So if we paid out $300 for the first three weeks or six weeks, then the CNMI government would have to cover the $100 cost share. So, for a total of $400 payment, that translates to over $2 million," he said.

Other than the reply letter from Fenton, Guerrero said that that was the only communication he got from FEMA between September 2020 and Jan. 6, 2021, despite numerous requests for an update.

Guerrero said he intends to ask for one last update this week. "If we don't pay out anything by March 27, we forfeit this amount," he said.

He said they've been sort of hanging and hoping that their waiver request would get approved but, with less than 30 days to go before the grant expires, he believes that they have to make a quick decision whether or not they could source the funding. "And I will do that in the coming next few days to [make] one final push," he said. "In my push in the coming days is where we are to make a decision and if there's no other source of funding, then I guess I would ask FEMA for one last [time]. …If we pay this today, when, how much time are we [going to] get to pay the share, and that may be a factor in our decision to commit to this program."

Guerrero said that Guam asked for a waiver as well. "They [Guam] did get FEMA's go ahead to go and pay and not have to pay with the share right then and there," he said.

Guerrero said the Department of Labor and Finance Secretary David Atalig are aware of the situation, and they're always following up on this as well.

Committee chair Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) told Guerrero that Atalig was recently in the House of Representatives' chamber for the House Ways and Means Committee meeting, during which lawmakers did inquire about the LWA program.

Sablan urged Guerrero to follow up with Atalig because Atalig appears to be under the impression that an $8-million match is required. "And I recall that you had said it was lower than that," she said.

Sablan pointed out that the CNMI is expecting a windfall of federal funds whose requirements for use will be quite flexible and could be used for government operations. Sablan said that, according to Atalig, these funds could also be used for the local match.

"So, if time is of the essence, if we could possibly lose out on $7 [million] to $8 million, that could go right into the pockets of people who really need it, who needed it, you know, last year," she said.

Guerrero said he has already alerted FEMA that, should the CNMI decide in the next few days to put up a local match, there is an allowable extension of time so the CNMI doesn't lose out on the LWA funding entirely.

Guerrero said he will report back to the House Committee on Health and Welfare this week.

Guerrero also said the CNMI government got approved for a community disaster loan for Super Typhoon Yutu.

"It doesn't have to be in millions and millions of dollars, but covers some shortfalls. In this event, in particular, the almost automatic $5 million that you get could also be used for this and any other activity," he said.

Guerrero said that's one of the options on the table.

T-Project collects petition to support passage of hate crimes bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

T-Project, a non-profit group that advocates for LGBTQ+ rights, has collected a petition from the community to support the passage of a hate crimes bill now pending in the CNMI House of Representatives.

T-Project president Tyra Lyn Sablan submitted Wednesday the petition that she signed, along with 24 other people, to House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) to push for the passage of House Bill 22-18, or the Hate Crimes Act of 2021. Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) introduced the measure, with 10 other representatives as co-authors.

The bill will amend the Commonwealth Code to provide enhanced sentences for defendants in crimes motivated by hate.

Sablan said the passage of H.B. 22-18 will set an important precedence in the CNMI to ensure that all persons who commit a crime out of hate will be held accountable for their actions and send a message to all those who wish to do the same. "We the people of the CNMI have long awaited such a bill and we urge the committee for the expedient passage of this bill," Sablan said in the petition submitted to the JGO committee.

Sablan said throughout the course of history, hate has manifested itself consistently and deadlier as generations pass. She cited several instances in history when hate led to the genocide of the Jews, slavery in America, the killings and bombings of mosques, the persecution of the Christians and the slaughter of many LGBTQ+ individuals around the world.

Closer to home, she cited the case of a 54-year-old barber who was attacked in May by an inmate at the Department of Corrections in Susupe while he was cutting hair for DOC. When the inmate was questioned why he attacked the barber, he replied, "Because he is gay."

Manglona

Sablan said crimes borne of hate against race, national origin, color, age, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, religious practice, or sexual orientation has plagued the CNMI for decades and has spread terror in the hearts of people in the community and has created a culture of hate and stigma.

"Although we cannot control the essence of people's morality, we can, however, regulate behavior and ensure that all individuals in the CNMI are provided equal opportunity to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without intimidation," she said.

Manglona's H.B. 22-18 is being reviewed now by Babauta's committee.

In his bill, Manglona said that criminal acts borne of hate have become more pervasive and widespread throughout the CNMI. Hate crimes, he said, are grounded upon an individual's identifying characteristics and are symbolic, meant to send a message to that person, and to that person's community.

He said the cultural fabric of the CNMI community is tightly wound with the values of respect and tolerance for one another. The lawmaker said the current lack of protection from crimes based on a person's race, color, national origin, age, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, religious practice, disability, or sexual orientation of a person is the antithesis of those values.

He said the CNMI trails behind the widespread reform that has taken hold in the U.S. that has recognized, illegalized, and penalized hate-based criminal acts, by expanding the number of "protected groups" as targets of hate-motivated crime: by providing penalty enhancement for hate-based crimes; and by requiring data collection and statistical reporting.

He said the CNMI joins a minority of states and territories that have yet to enact meaningful legislation to regulate hate-based crimes (Arkansas, Wyoming, South Carolina, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

Manglona said it is time for the Commonwealth to join the majority of states that have passed reform legislation regulating hate-based criminal acts.

The proposed legislation will ensure that every individual within the Commonwealth is afforded an equal opportunity to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without the fear or intimidation that their inherent qualities or characteristics would exclude them from all privileges of the Commonwealth.

Under the bill, if the maximum penalty for the underlying crimes is one year or less, the penalty for a violation of this act shall be imprisonment of not more than one year or a fine of not more than $2,000, or both.

If the maximum penalty for the underlying crime is five years or over one year, the penalty for a violation of this act shall be imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of not more than $5,000, or both.

If the maximum penalty for the underlying crime is 10 years or more, the penalty for a violation of this act shall be imprisonment of not more than 10 years or a fine of not more than $15,000, or both.

In addition, the court may require as part of the sentence imposed upon a person convicted of a hate crime, that the defendant complete a program, training session, or counseling session directed at hate prevention and education, where the court determines such program, training session or counseling session is appropriate and available.

Manglona said the enactment of the bill shall not have the effect of terminating, or any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date this act becomes effective.

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and others. The plus represents other sexual identities.

5-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 9:16pm on March 3, 2021, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.615°N 145.641°E in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. ***(PR)***

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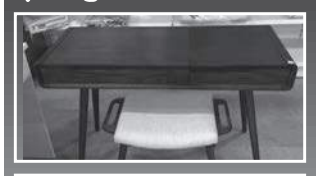

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-001-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation Program, Project No. CPA-SA-001-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Friday, March 19, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: February 24, 2021

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROGRAM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-002-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Pavement Management System (PMP) Program, Project No. CPA-SA-002-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Monday, March 22, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: February 24, 2021

OAG files amicus brief in CERCLA case before US high court

On behalf of a bipartisan coalition consisting of the CNMI and 24 states plus the District of Columbia, the Office of the Attorney General has filed an amicus brief supporting the government of Guam in its closely-watched U.S. Supreme Court litigation against the U.S. government concerning cleanup efforts at a contaminated site that was developed, used, and maintained for decades by the U.S. Navy.

» US Supreme Court will address questions of superfund liability

Years after the U.S. Navy abandoned the site, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sued Guam under the Clean Water Act, alleging that the site had polluted U.S. territorial waters. Guam entered into a consent decree with EPA in 2004, and the resulting remediation project for the site is estimated to cost $160 million—a staggering figure by any measure, but especially for a small jurisdiction like Guam.

The Guam government then sued United States, seeking to recover costs associated with the site's remediation under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, which allows for the recovery of remediation costs from responsible parties. A U.S. District Court allowed the cost recovery claim to proceed; however, in February 2020, the D.C. Circuit held that the lawsuit presented a contribution claim that was time-barred by CERCLA's statute of limitations. Guam sought a writ of certiorari from the U.S. Supreme Court, which was granted in early January 2021.

The amicus brief advocates for Guam's position in the matter, from the perspective of the interests of states and territories. In particular, the brief argues that the D.C. Circuit's decision is at odds with states' interests because (1) it discourages cooperation and settlement with federal and state environmental regulators; (2) it allows the United States to evade liability for contamination it is responsible for, leaving individual states and their residents with a disproportionate financial burden; and (3) it undermines principles of federalism by threatening to override state-law policy choices regarding how to address environmental cleanup and division of financial responsibility.

"Our office sees the issues in this case as significant to all states and territories and was excited for the opportunity to take the lead in coordinating this effort to support the government of Guam," said Attorney General Edward Manibusan.

A ruling in the case is expected by the end of the Supreme Court's current term in summer 2021.

The law firm of Husch Blackwell LLP prepared the brief with assistance from the Office of the Attorney General team, which included deputy attorney general Lillian Tenorio, Chief Solicitor J. Robert Glass, Jr., and assistant attorneys general Alison Nelson, John Lowrey, Keisha Blaise, and Keith Chambers II. ***(PR)***

Marianas Creations is latest NMC ProaPerks Partner

NMC

Marianas Creations is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive $1 off each drink. Photo was taken in 2019.

Marianas Creations is the latest business to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for NMC students, employees, and alumni..

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive $1 discount for each drink at Marianas Creations.

Marianas Creations joins the growing list of ProaPerks partners, such as 153 Restaurant, 360 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, AllStar Sporting Goods, Aqua Connections, Inc., Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Bolis R US 2, Bubba Gump, Casa Urashima, Caravan of Food, Chelu Alynez Enterprise, Coral Candy, Docomo Pacific, D' Chef's Kitchen, Dollar Days (Garapan), Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant Cafe & Grill, Gold's Gym, Grandvrio Resort Saipan, Great Harvest, Boyer Trading Company LLC. dba Ginen Saipan, Healing Stones Spa, Highway Express Auto Care Center, Herman's Modern Bakery, Inc./Tan Marikita's Cafe, Hertz Rental Car, Hyatt, Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts, Ina's Kitchen, Isla Shave Ice, Junlyn Salon, Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell, Kevin's Cafe, Kiki's, Latte Build Gym, Lohas Massage, Magbers Snack Bar, MMC & Pacific Labs, LLC, Mermaid Restaurant & Milk tea, Nam Dae Moon, National Car Rental, Natural Nail & Spa, Neni Girl Nails, NMC Bookstore, Ocean Candy, Ocean Star Restaurant, Pacific Home Appliances, Pena House Boutique, Saipan Computer Services, Salty's, Shirley's Cafe, Summer Snow Cafe & Kids Corner cafe, Surf Club, The Pacific Supply, The Shack, Tribe Marianas, and Triple J Motors.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information about the program, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

For more information about Marianas Creations, visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/marianascreationssaipan.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include Northern Marianas College alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Scheduled power outage on Tuesday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be a scheduled power service interruption on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, from 8:30am to 12:30pm for portions of Sadog Tasi. The purpose of the power service interruption is to de-energize utility lines such that CUC linemen are able to safely re-route two 3-phase power poles to eliminate 2-spans primary lines and to connect a 3-phase jumper along Coastal Drive in Sadog Tasi.

- Outage Type: Sectionalized Interruption on the Feeder 4 Circuit
- Project Location: Along Coastal Drive in Sadog Tasi
- Power Service Areas Affected: Sadog Tasi [Laguna Dr. (partials), Trenchera Ln., Nonak Dr., and Coastal Dr. (partials)]
- Water Well Affected: Calhoun, Rapago and Puerto Rico TSA
- Wastewater Lift Station Affected: None

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
AUDIT MANAGER

EXAMINATION NO. OPA-21-001
Opening Date: 1/14/21 Closing Date: March 19, 2021

For more information, please visit our website at www.opacnmi.com or come visit us at our office in Capitol Hill. Interested persons may also pick up a copy of the Examination Announcement at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Garapan.

Office of the Public Auditor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
Address: 1236 Yap Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Mailing Address: PO Box 501399, Saipan MP 96950
Email: mail@opacnmi.com
Phone: (670) 322-6481 Fax: (670) 322-7812

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-019
SUBMISSION DATE: February 25, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Supply, Delivery & Installation of all Mass Hazards Warning Alert System for Saipan at Four (4) Pre-Identified Sites"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 09, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Homeland Security Emergency Management.** The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 17, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA SECRETARY, DPW
/S/ GERALD J. DELEON GUERRERO HOMELAND SECURITY MANAGEMENT
/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-014
SUBMISSION DATE: March 25, 2021 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

"Supply and Delivery of a Combination Wet / Dry Vacuum Track for the Department of Public Works, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars ($50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 09, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Roads and Ground Office Lower Base.** The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 17, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA SECRETARY, DPW
/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Name: Maria Michael
Address: P.O. Box 10003 ccc 523
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 288-6334

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Adoption of: L.R.S, S.R.S., and C.R.S. Minor Children
By: Maria Michael Petitioner

FCD-AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0054

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 31, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom Superior Court, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 23rd day of February, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

KHS uses app to transform student reading experience

» Ebook and audiobook app encourages students to read anytime, anywhere

Kagman High School is using technology to expand access to digital reading materials by connecting their students with the school's broad collection of ebooks and audiobooks through an online app called Sora.

As described in a Google search, the Sora app empowers students to discover and enjoy ebooks and audiobooks from their school, for both leisure and class-assigned reading and KHS is harnessing the power of this application to transform the reading experience of its students.

Through Sora, Kagman High School students have convenient and safe access to hundreds of ebooks and audiobooks from the school's collection. These reading materials are available for use inside the classroom, at home and anywhere 24/7.

The combination of convenience, ease of reading on-the-go, and personalized reading experience of both teacher-assigned and student-selected digital books inspires student learning anytime, anywhere

The Sora app is available for students, faculty and staff to download through the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, and on Chromebooks that support the Google Play Store. It is also available for use in Web browsers at https://soraapp.com.

To learn more, visit the Kagman High School Library website at www.kagmanlibrary.org. ***(PR)***

March 2021 is CNMI Women's Month

The 2021 CNMI Women's Month proclamation signing was held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe last Wednesday, Mar. 3, 2021
NEIL FAMA

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Women's Affairs Office under the Office of the Governor, together with the CNMI Women's Association, hosted a proclamation signing for 2021 Women's Month last Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios performed the signing of the proclamation, with their wives—first lady Diann Torres and Maria Wella Sablan Palacios—sitting beside them.

This year's theme, "Gender Equality: Key to Sustainable Development," reflects the CNMI Women's Association's ongoing mission to empower women as guardians of the CNMI's g*uinaha* (assets), both tangible and intangible, to include political, economic, and social leadership.

The proclamation was read aloud by Joeline R. Mettao and was signed Torres and Palacios shortly after.

In a poem read by 2014 Miss Teen Marianas first runner-up Tiana Reyes, she described women as inculpable, is beauty, is both strict and rage but executes everything that she does with grace.

"A woman, a body in water, what is the difference," said Reyes.

A brief showcase of the 2021 Miss Marianas contestants—Richelle Ramon, Toremy Diaz, Ha'Ane Eugenio, Savannah Delos Santos, Bernadette Horey, Lily Carrilo, Vincent Rabasto, and Naomi Lizama—also took place. This year's Miss Marianas pageant is slated for March 13, starting at 4pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Shortly after, in the spirit of the proclamation, Torres shared his appreciation for women by saying, "As a man, and the man of the house, there's nothing like the mother's touch. Growing up, my brothers and I all looked up to our mother and our one and only sister."

Diann Torres expressed appreciation for the community in the CNMI and its accomplishments, where "man supports woman, woman supports man, profit supports non-profit, non-profit supports profit, public supports private, private supports public. …We all need to work together, and together we stand."

The event was emceed by Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations executive director Frances M. Sablan, who also gave the welcoming remarks. Afterwards, CWA board member Cecilan Taitano gave brief remarks.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eliceo D. Cabrera
Administrator

Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

NOTICE

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ROUTE 35 ROAD IMPROVEMENT (CHALAN TUN HERMAN PAN-AIRPORT ROAD) COASTAL PERMIT NO. SMS-2000-X-142-A1

POSTPONED

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby informs the general public that the public hearing for the proposed road improvements of the Route 35 Road (Chalan Tun Herman Pan/Airport Road) has been postponed until further notice.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is proposing to improve the Route 35 (Tun Herman Pan) Road which includes hazard elimination such as inclusion of guardrail, traffic signs and drainage improvements and pavement rehabilitation. Route 35 is a two-lane undivided roadway along the 0.78-mile length beginning from the Route 31 (Chalan Msgr. Guerrero) and Route 35 (Chalan Tun Herman Pan) intersection and ending at the intersection of Route 304 (Flame Road) and Route 35 (Chalan Tun Herman Pan).

Written comments can still be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, sent by fax to 664-8315, or emailed to permitting@dcrm.gov.mp. The project files are open and can be reviewed by scheduling an appointment with DCRM. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Route 35 Road Improvement project.

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is now conducting the CNMI 2021 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All private businesses, public agencies, and organizations in the CNMI, with and without employees, are urged to participate in the 2021 PWS survey.

The survey data collection period will begin on March 1, 2021, and end on March 31, 2021.

Data Collection Portal Link: https://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/

2021 Champions of Equal Opportunity

Photos by NEIL FAMA

Tinian Private Business Advocate of the Year.

Saipan Legislative Advocate of the Year.

Tinian and Rota Legislative Advocate of the Year.

Saipan Transportation Advocate of the Year.

Tinian and Rota Public Entity Advocate of the Year.

Members of University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the Northern Marianas College.

2021 Rota Champions of Equal Oppurtunity.

The government proclaimed March 2021 as Developmental Disabilities Month on March 2, with a proclamation signing at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall, followed by an award ceremony to recognize the 2021 Champions of Equal Opportunity. Photo shows all the 2021 Champions of Equal Opportunity.

MCS AlumKnight Association names major awardees

Mount Carmel School and its AlumKnight Association has named 1984 AlumKnight Dr. Esther Muña as its AlumKnight of the Year, who is being honored this year for being instrumental in the CNMI's COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Muña

Muña, who is chief executive officer for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force are credited with successfully guiding the CNMI to limit the community spread of the virus and protect the community.

"Thank you to the MCS AlumKnight Association…," said Muña. "It is an honor but I do want to share this honor with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for coming together and working with the CNMI Governor's Task Force to accomplish and achieve the containment of this virus and ensuring the safety of the community for the CNMI. …I do want to give credit to the education I received from MCS and for my faith. I think about the day we had our first case and I did pray because I wanted God's wisdom to give me the right path and to ensure I make right decisions for my team and for the people with righteousness, equity, and justice for all, especially when it comes to public health. I appreciate the recognition, but a lot of it too is less of me and more of Him. God is my driver and while I appreciate the recognition I owe all glory to God."

Bautista

This year's Millennium Falcon of the Year awardee is 2011 AlumKnight Kevin Bautista, who is currently the press secretary for the CNMI's Office of the Governor. Throughout his early career, Bautista has assisted in numerous community projects that have benefited the CNMI.

"I want to thank the Mount Carmel School family, the bishop, the AlumKnight Association, and everyone who calls this beautiful institution home," said Bautista. "I'd like to also thank Gov. Ralph Torres for giving the opportunity to give back to my community five years ago when I first moved back home from Michigan. What's really special about that is being able to serve in this capacity and give back to the community I call home."

This year's Legacy Teacher of the Year is Bernadita Benavente Helstrom, who is an educational leader who dedicated her life to education. The first indigenous principal of Mount Carmel School, Ms. Bernie, as she is affectionately called, earned her teaching degree at the College of Saint Mary and has been a teacher and leader in education at Mount Carmel School, at the Maris Stella School in Palau, and at public and Catholic schools in Las Vegas Nevada.

Mount Carmel School's Class of the Year went to the Class of 2020 for their perseverance and determination to graduate on-time and together.

Each year, Mount Carmel School and its AlumKnight Association facilitates a selection process to determine the Class of the Year, Legacy Teacher of the Year, Millennium Falcon of the Year, and AlumKnight of the Year. Prior to the pandemic, the awards were presented during the association's annual fundraiser "A Night with the Knights." However, to ensure the safety of the community, major awards were announced through a virtual award ceremony hosted on Mount Carmel School's YouTube channel (Mount Carmel School). ***(PR)***

MCS Early Bird discounts for families

Mount Carmel School will continue to provide discounts for families for the 2021-2022 school year.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School will continue to provide discounts for families for the 2021-2022 school year. The Early Bird Special provides families with more than one child over $500 off of the overall tuition.

Families with two children can avail of a $600 tuition discount for the second child, families with three children can avail of a $1,000 tuition discount for the third child, and families with four children can avail of a $1,500 tuition discount for the fourth child.

Additionally, the annual early bird registration discount is as follows: For grades K4-K5 registration is $50 per student (normally $100). For students in grades first through 12th, the registration fee is $100 per student (normally $400.) The deadline for the Early Bird registration and fees is scheduled for May 1, 2021.

Additionally, the school's Leadership Team will be exploring ways to expand scholarship funding and financial aid. This may include earmarking a portion of all Education Tax Credit revenue toward the school's scholarship and financial aid program.

School president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero said, "Times have been hard and we aim to assist our families during these trying times. In addition to family discounts and scholarships, MCS is working to create new opportunities for students to receive financial aid to assist each student's education and future."

Application forms for academic and extracurricular scholarships will announced on Mount Carmel School's media platforms.

To learn more about enrolling at Mount Carmel School for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year, call 234-6184 or visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. ***(PR)***

April 16 is deadline to comment on PA Memo about USMC move to Guam

ASAN, Guam—Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Marianas announces the availability of a Programmatic Agreement Memo for public review and comments through April 16, 2021.

PA Memos provide an opportunity for interested members of the public to participate in the Section 106 consultation process required under the National Historic Preservation Act.

» 45-day comment period begins

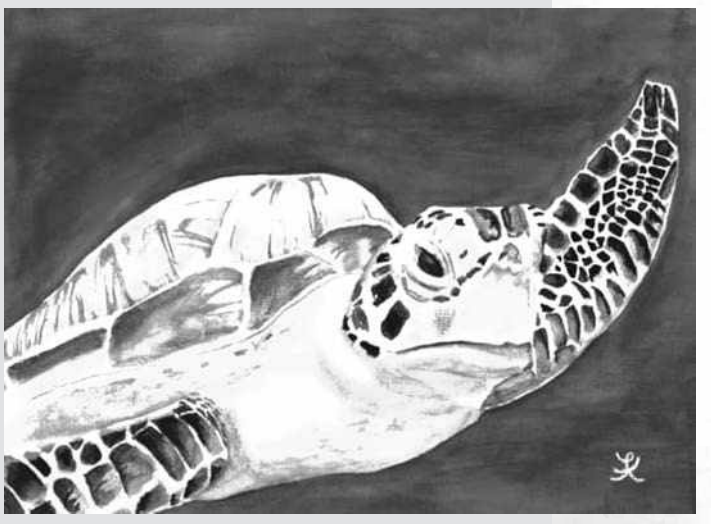
This PA Memo provides new cultural and natural resources information associated with following planned construction projects: Design and construction for a multiple vertical construction project. The project will design and construct four buildings: P-311 Central Fuel Station; P-312 Distribution Warehouse; P-317 Consolidated EOD Compound; and P-804 Central Issue Facility. All four buildings are located in the main cantonment area of Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz previously prepared for vertical construction by J-001B Utilities and Site Improvements.

The PA Memo is available on the NAVFAC Pacific Cultural Information webpage at http://go.usa.gov/kZWG (the URL is case sensitive).

This is a 45-day public comment period and interested members of the community may submit comments via email to criwebcomment@navy.mil.

Those without internet access may obtain a printed copy of this PA Memo from the Guam Historic Resources Division, located at 490 Chalan Palasyo, Agana Heights, 96910 (in the Department of Parks and Recreation Office).

In addition, the community is encouraged to subscribe to regular updates and other information related to the Programmatic Agreement by visiting the Joint Region Marianas Web page and signing up at the following link: https://go.usa.gov/x5BQS. ***(USN)***



BENEFIT DRIVE

Nine-year-old Kate King Manglona, shown here with her art teacher, Victoria Sewell, holds up her watercolor, titled "Frank," which shows a green sea turtle. Manglona is selling prints of her artwork on Saturday, March 6, 2021, from 3pm to 6pm at Marianas Creations on Saipan to benefit Saipan Cares for Animals, a nonprofit animal rescue clinic serving Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We're so close to beating COVID-19. Why would Texas Gov. Abbott end mask rule and make it worse?

Before issuing his order to end mask mandates, Gov. Greg Abbott must not have looked at the recent numbers of coronavirus deaths in Texas. Or worse, he did and decided that the 59 deaths reported Monday is good enough.

Either way, the governor's order Tuesday to end the statewide mask mandate and business capacity restrictions is a mistake. Even with recent improvement in COVID-19 case totals, hospitalizations and deaths, the pandemic is not over. Another spike is possible before enough people are vaccinated to finally squelch the disease's spread, and Abbott's order makes it more likely we'll see one in Texas.

The governor was careful to say that everyone should still take personal responsibility and adhere to public health recommendations. And many no doubt will. But plenty will hear only that the governor says we're in the clear and ditch their facial coverings. Sending that message, even wrapped in a careful warning about the need to follow guidelines, is irresponsible.

At a minimum, Abbott should have given local officials flexibility. His new order appears to offer no wiggle room whatsoever. Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, who just extended the local mask order last week, reversed course almost immediately after Abbott's announcement and canceled mask mandates. Abbott's order may be fine in many parts of Texas, but in large urban areas, public health officials and elected officeholders need to be able to respond to a sudden surge.

Abbott has made it pretty tough for them to react. His order allows county judges in areas where coronavirus cases make up more than 15% of hospitalizations to impose some "COVID-19-related mitigation strategies," though with almost no enforcement power.

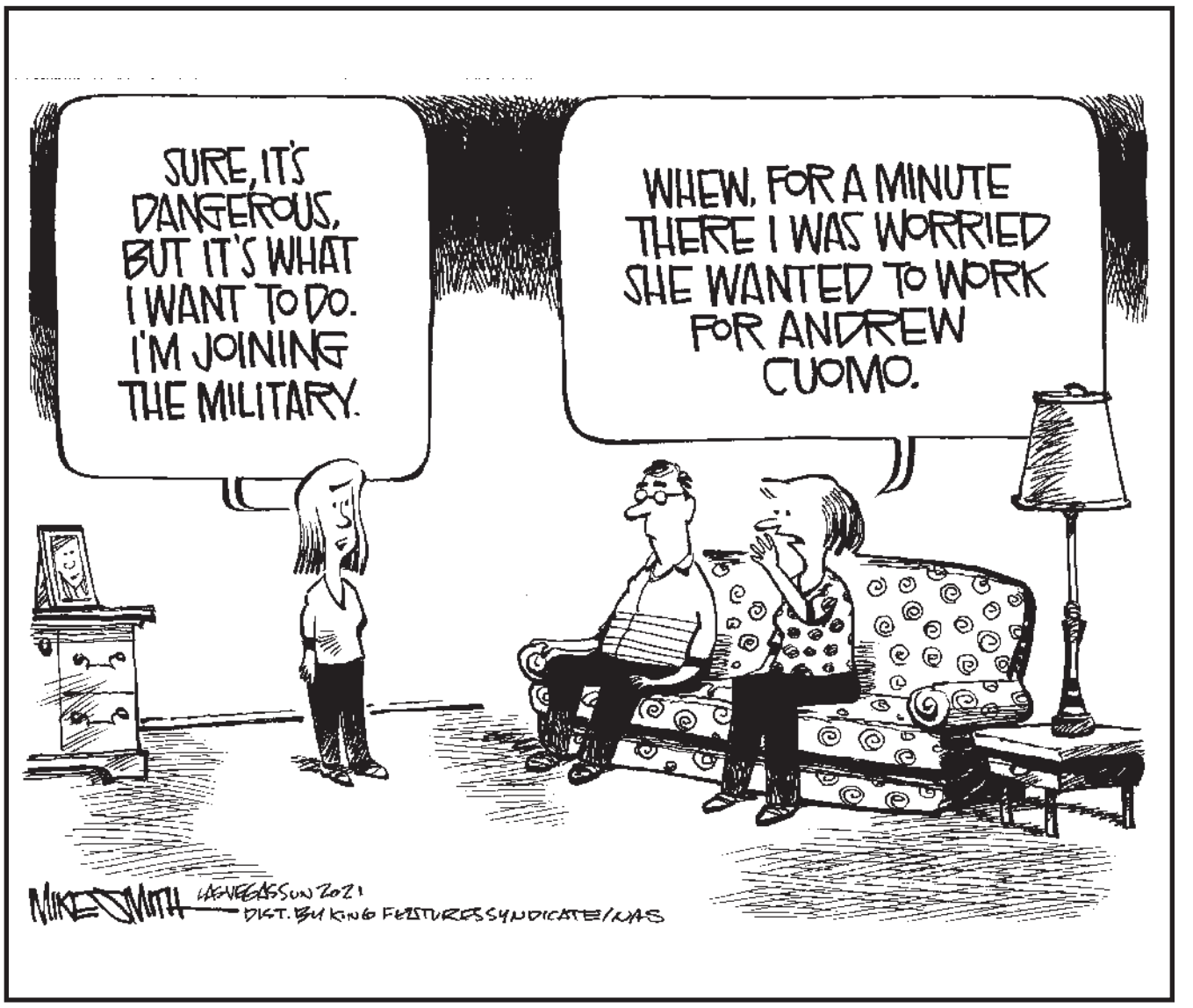
The position the governor has put businesses in, too, is maddening. Many would no doubt like to continue requiring masks, if only for the sake of their potentially vulnerable employees. They still can, but it raises the risk of confrontation and makes it harder to justify such a requirement when the governor declares it's time to end it.

Large chains will probably keep their mask requirements, though it will be harder for individual locations to enforce them. And local businesses risk antagonizing customers they need to survive.

Why do this now? Why, when the news is so good on cases, hospitalizations and vaccine production, increase the danger? Why, with spring break and its associated travel and activity around the corner, send the message that we can let our guard down?

There's little to gain, unless the governor has been feeling heat on his right flank over COVID restrictions. He highlighted his steady approval ratings on the eve of his announcement, and politically seems to be in good shape.

See TEXAS on Next Page


SURE, IT'S DANGEROUS, BUT IT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO. I'M JOINING THE MILITARY.
WHEW, FOR A MINUTE THERE I WAS WORRIED SHE WANTED TO WORK FOR ANDREW CUOMO.
MIKE SMITH LASVEGASSUN 2021
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

What I will miss about my pandemic existence

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. His books include* Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero.

With vaccines on the way, it's likely that 2021 will be much better, or at least more normal, than 2020. But a question remains: Which parts of our pandemic existence will we find most difficult to give up?

I'm not talking here about major social trends, such as working more from home, nor do I mean to minimize the suffering and disruption caused by COVID-19, which will reverberate for years if not decades. I'm referring to the habits and routines we developed as individuals.

I for one will miss the Saturday evening Zoom meeting. Since the pandemic started, I have found it easy to schedule calls at 5:30 or 6:30 p.m., even when more than one person is involved. Everyone just says yes. Why not? You're not going out to the movies or dinner. Even if you think Zoom calls are oppressive—especially if you think Zoom calls are oppressive—it is better to have somewhere to put your marginal Zoom call other than 2 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon.

For a lot of people, the blurring of work and private time has been a burden. But I've been living that way most of my life. For the last year, the rest of the world has been forced to adopt my work habits, and I am going to miss it when they return to traditional socializing. I'll still be offering you that Saturday night slot. We'll see how many takers I get.

I also will miss early lunch, a practice also noticed by New York Times columnist David Brooks. Like a lot of people, I miss eating in a variety of settings—not just restaurants or coffee shops, but cafeterias or my desk—so I look for that variety temporally. The early cooking of a hamburger does indeed provide that break in routine, and with lunch at 11, why do I need breakfast anyway?

Have I mentioned that, like many Americans, I have been sleeping longer during the pandemic? In my case it is only about 15 minutes longer, but it's enough reason to accelerate lunch and minimize breakfast. I get less done with that extra sleep, but at this point I am not inclined to give it back, no matter how well those vaccines work.

Restaurant norms are yet another reason for the 11 a.m. lunch—or, for that matter, the 4:30 p.m. dinner. There is one spacious, well-ventilated restaurant where I have been willing to dine inside. But I eat there only when I can start before others have arrived—in this case, 11 or 4:30. As the months have passed, I have noticed more people showing up early, typically walking in as I am leaving. Even as the pandemic recedes, I intend to keep having an early lunch. I wonder if they will, too.

Meanwhile, I am accumulating messes of various kinds and sizes. I no longer clean out my car, for example. Other than immediate family, who is riding with me anyway? I hesitate to make a prediction about how this habit will evolve as people get vaccinated, but right now if my car breaks down I will have a multitude of good books to read. The pile of books and papers on my sofa is also larger than it used to be, as I have had no company and thus no incentive to clean up.

Is my experience unique? Or, once the pandemic is over, might we all move to laxer norms of dress and orderliness? It could be like one of those companies where senior management stops wearing ties and the rest of the office follows suit.

I now think of the house as more of a storage chamber and less of an entertainment venue. That too may persist, as I don't expect those cans of sardines to be run down to zero anytime soon.

I will miss being able to drive virtually anywhere with only modest levels of traffic. I used to treat 4 to 6:30 p.m. as a kind of dead zone when I had to be home or bad things would happen. Now I can be on the road during that time. That freedom will be hard to give up, and I will probably fight it at first, until I get caught in some very bad traffic jams.

Most of all, I wonder how much I have internalized the icky feelings I have developed about certain public events and spaces. I wouldn't think of entering a crowded indoor bar—in fact, the very thought repulses me, as the thought of a steak dinner might disgust a vegetarian. How long will it take for those feelings to go away in a well-vaccinated America?

COVID-19 has brought so many huge changes to society. But in my day-to-day life—and maybe yours, too—the small ones are more noticeable, and could be just as lasting.

Texas and Mississippi governors are recklessly reopening

By MARIEL GARZA
Los Angeles Times

Mariel Garza is an editorial writer for the Los Angeles Times.

With more people vaccinated against COVID-19 every day and case numbers just a fraction of what they were at the beginning of the year, it seems as if—finally—we are are beating the pandemic.

But remember what happened last time we thought that? It feels like a million years have passed since May, so I will refresh your memory. After a couple of terrible months huddling in our homes surrounded by cases of toilet paper, it seemed that the nasty little coronavirus was on retreat. Hooray! We flattened that ol' curve but good.

Pandemic restrictions were shucked off along with our pandemic PJs. But after a few short weeks of people crowding back into bars, having barbecues and going to protests, the virus came roaring back to life. After the summer surge had abated, people let down their guards once again, and I don't have to tell you what happened. The horror of the holiday season is still playing out in death and despair even if the numbers of people fighting for their lives in the hospitals are down to pre-holiday levels.

On Monday, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, urged states not to reopen too soon, lest they undo all the months of mask wearing and social distancing. Cases are already starting to tick up, she said, and relaxing our guard too soon could precipitate a fourth wave.

"Please hear me clearly," Walensky said during a briefing with the White House's COVID19 response team. "At this level of cases with variants spreading, we stand to completely lose the hard-earned ground we have gained."

Apparently, the governors of Texas and Mississippi don't hear clearly. Or perhaps they simply don't care to listen to lady scientists who don't tell them what they want to hear. On Tuesday they both announced that they were lifting pandemic restrictions in their state, including mask mandates.

In his announcement, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott claimed that "state mandates are no longer needed" and said he was allowing businesses in the Lone Star State to open to full capacity starting next week.

Abbott seems to be forgetting his own role in the second and third waves of COVID-19, which has claimed the lives of 44,000 Texans so far. In June, he said he regretted letting bars open too soon after the first wave. The "bar setting, in reality, just doesn't work with a pandemic," he said.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves tweeted that his state would be doing the same but even sooner: "Starting tomorrow, we are lifting all of our county mask mandates and businesses will be able to operate at full capacity without any state-imposed rules. Our hospitalizations and case numbers have plummeted, and the vaccine is being rapidly distributed. It is time!"

As far as I can tell from their official websites and Wikipedia entries, neither Reeves nor Abbott are scientists or even scientifically inclined. Abbott is a lawyer who spent his pre-gubernatorial career either arguing before a judge or serving as one. Reeves was in banking and finance.

I'm not sure what gives them the expertise to override the guidance of the nation's top infectious disease experts. Especially when hundreds of thousands of their residents still don't have clean water to wash their hands, weeks after the arctic storm that tore through the region last month.

Nor are their states shining examples of COVID-19 vaccine distribution—both are below the national average in giving shots. Just 14% of people in Mississippi and 13% of Texans have received at least one shot. Even California, with its well-publicized vaccine rollout mess, is doing a better job of inoculating its people.

You would think Abbott in particular would be less sanguine about putting his people in harm's away. Texans might have forgotten what he said or did last summer, but they can't have forgotten that just last month millions of them had to endure days of freezing temperatures without power and heat after a massive failure of the state's electrical grid. Dozens of people died.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom tweeted two words about Abbott's announcement: "Absolutely reckless." And Newsom should know. He was among the governors who lifted restrictions prematurely in May only to watch the virus come roaring back a few weeks later. Now he requires that counties reopen only when certain metrics are met, and then only by degrees.

In recent months, state legislators across the country have started talking about curbing the wide-reaching executive powers that they'd previously given governors to use during prolonged emergencies. They do have a point. One person, it turns out, can do a lot of damage.

And for what? On Tuesday, President Joe Biden said that the country should have enough vaccines for every adult by the end of May, which is really not that far away. We should know long before then if the current retreat of the virus will hold. Is that really too long to wait to go outside without a face mask or see a movie in a packed theater?

My stepfather was murdered by machete six years ago. Here's what I would say to him today

By TRISHA AHMED
THE BALTIMORE SUN

My stepfather, Avijit Roy, was a Bangladeshi American writer and engineer. While visiting Bangladesh, he was violently attacked with machetes and murdered on the street, as he left a book fair with my mother, who was also attacked and suffered life-threatening wounds. This happened six years ago, on Feb. 26, 2015. Ten days prior to this distressing anniversary, five of the attackers, members of a terrorist group inspired by al-Qaida, were sentenced to death in a Bangladeshi court.

This verdict does not bring me closure—so many questions about the forces underlying his murder remain unanswered. If I could talk with my dad today, this is what I would say.

Dear Dad,

People took pictures of you after the attack. One photo shows your glasses and a chunk of your brain, lying in a pool of your blood on the pavement. I think of this image every few months.

But in the days leading up to the verdict in your murder (yes, it took almost six years for Bangladesh to hear your case in court), I couldn't stop thinking about your glasses on the ground.

I'm no better at drawing now than I was when you were alive, but I sketched your glasses on a piece of paper. I drew all sorts of sights around Washington, D.C., into the lenses of those paper frames: monuments, memorials and other places you'll never know. I pass by them every day now, as a D.C.-based graduate student at the University of Maryland focusing on investigative journalism.

America doesn't seem to care much for journalists now. Neither does Bangladesh. But if you were around, I hope you would say: "Journalist? That's even better than a scientist!"

Which means I didn't become the scientist you were so excited for me to be.

I couldn't commit to it after what happened to you. To deal with the trauma of losing you and nearly losing Maa, I became obsessed with other people's stories. I started collecting them in Baltimore as an undergrad at Johns Hopkins, and then all over America, finding that so many others are also dealing with fathers, brothers, cousins and friends being killed.

You should know that you changed the world, Dad. People marched in the streets for you. Millions of people learned your name. I'm sure you would ask me, excitedly: "Does that mean the world is more rational now?"

I don't think so.

After you died, the attacks continued. Your attackers were affiliated with a group known as "al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent." They didn't like what you wrote about science and secularism.

In the months after your death, extremists killed your friends. And your publisher. And a bunch of other people you didn't know. The attacks were graphic, with machetes and ISIS videos and witnesses who might never forget seeing their partners die.

I'm realizing now, after six years, that the news of each murder gashed fresh wounds into scars that were not done healing for you. Getting better is taking me so long, Dad. I'm still mourning you, but also them.

On Feb. 16, some of your attackers were sentenced to death. Knowing they're going to die doesn't make me feel better about losing you. Their loved ones will mourn them too.

Though these five were charged with carrying out your attack, so many more were involved in the planning, execution and silencing of Bangladeshi bloggers. Some orchestrators have never been caught, or even identified. After the verdict, Maa asked questions I wish could answer: Where are the masterminds of the attack? Why was one leader killed in police custody, years before the trial?

"Money used to flow in to kill bloggers, publishers and (gay people)" in Bangladesh, one of your publisher's attackers confessed. So, who funded your murder?

I thought, if the Bangladeshi investigators don't have answers, then maybe journalists will. Unfortunately, Bangladesh—like many countries now—is imprisoning journalists for speaking out.

Just last year, Bangladeshi journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol mysteriously disappeared for 53 days after criticizing a government official's alleged sex-trafficking involvement. When he resurfaced, Kajol was then sentenced to seven years in prison, under Bangladesh's controversial 2018 Digital Security Act, which restricts free speech. Two other journalists were jailed in May under the same law.

Thankfully, Kajol had a kid who fought for his father's release and gained international attention. Kajol was released from jail after seven months, instead of seven years.

Cases like his and yours, which are only the tip of the iceberg, keep me up at night. When I finally sleep, you tend to die. I still wake from violent dreams and feel tired all day, desperate for rest. I might have actually forgotten how to rest. But maybe, like you, I've never known how.

I remember your late nights writing, your determination to change minds—but most vividly, I remember your songs. When you couldn't get topics you were writing about, like "intelligent design," out of your head, you'd turn those words into loud, belted-out tunes. I remember us dancing to them. I wonder, if you were here now, would you still be singing and dancing with me?

There's little point pondering hypotheticals. But one hypothesis comforts me: As long as there are people like Kajol's son and your daughter, the world will be forced to provide answers—as we bend societies toward your vision of rationality, of equity of peace.

Trisha Ahmed is a graduate student at the University of Maryland and reporter at the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism. Email: tahmedhoque2@gmail.com.

TEXAS

From Page 10

On the other part of his order, removing restrictions that had businesses operating at a maximum 75% of their capacity, Abbott may merely be nodding to reality. Texans' activity levels seem to have increased in recent weeks, and many businesses don't seem to be paying attention to headcount.

His order encourages continued social distancing. So, Abbott acknowledges that crowded spaces are a bad idea but takes away a tool to limit crowding. Pity the poor restaurant owner who tries to untie that knot.

Texans are understandably done with this nightmarish year of the pandemic and its restrictions. Every day brings good news about the vaccine supply, the quickening pace of inoculations and a possible return to so many of life's activities that are still on hold. Like an exhausted runner, Texans are lunging for the finish line.

It's lamentable that the governor can't show the patience that most citizens have. Instead, he decided to make more illness and death more likely just as the finish line is in sight.

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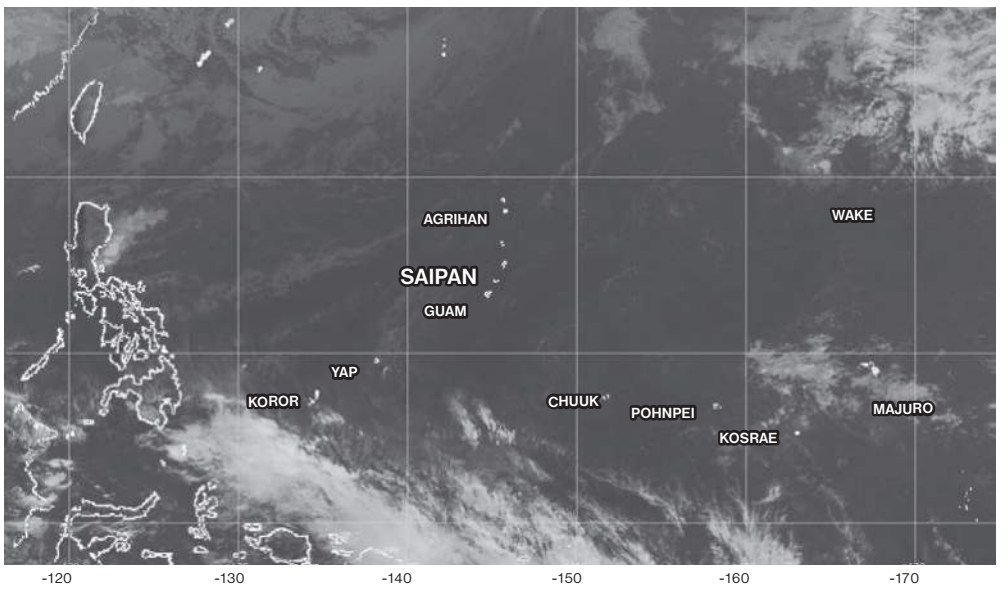
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
87° 76°	87° 76°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:48 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly cloudy skies and almost no showers over the Marianas forecast zones. There are some shreds of clouds to the east moving in the direction of the Marianas, nothing really substantial though. The deep tropical moisture is all trapped south of 8N. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet composed of east-northeast trade-wind waves and swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	83° / 75°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Saturday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Sunday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Tuesday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:00 AM	5:09 AM
Saturday	12:18 AM	11:52 AM	-
Sunday	1:19 AM	12:48 PM	-
Monday	2:19 AM	1:46 PM	-
Tuesday	3:16 AM	2:45 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	72° / 61°
Beijing	61° / 34°
Hong Kong	75° / 68°
Honolulu	74° / 63°
London	55° / 45°
Los Angeles	65° / 55°
Manila	90° / 72°
Melbourne	97° / 73°
Miami	80° / 68°
New York	40° / 32°
Osaka	54° / 39°
Paris	61° / 46°
Busan	57° / 43°
Rome	64° / 46°
Salem	71° / 56°
San Francisco	54° / 44°
Seoul	54° / 28°
Tokyo	55° / 43°
Washington, DC	53° / 38°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:24 AM	High Tide	1.57
6:02 AM	Low Tide	0.84
11:40 AM	High Tide	1.79
7:03 PM	Low Tide	-0.05

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 5, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1, 5 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 5, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

MARK RABAGO
New Shin Restaurant is open for breakfast from 6am to 10am everyday.

Breakfast of champions at New Shin

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

If breakfast is the most important meal of the day, then mosey down to New Shin Restaurant along Beach Road in Garapan where a veritable feast awaits. Chef Yan Jiagui is cooking up a storm of traditional breakfast Chinese fare that range in price from 50 cents to $4 for everyone to enjoy.

New Shin Restaurant's breakfast menu includes congee, sweet and savory tofu, butchi (sesame ball), eggs boiled in tea leaves, spring rolls (lumpia), Chinese pancakes, deep-fried dough stick, a variety of sausages, eight types of pao (including pan-fried pork bun), and its dim-sum lineup—steamed ribs with black bean sauce, sticky rice in lotus leaf, siu mai (siomai), and steamed chicken feet.

MARK RABAGO
New Shin Restaurant's traditional breakfast Chinese fare ranges in price from 50 cents to $4.

MARK RABAGO
New Shin Restaurant's cheung fan (steamed rice noodle rolls).

Aside from these items presented in a buffet-style spread, customers can also order cheung fan (steamed rice noodle rolls) and wanton soup a la carte.

Since they opened for breakfast a few months ago, New Shin Restaurant has become a favorite of sorts for hospital staff just finishing their overnight shifts, laborers who want to kick off their day on a full stomach, and runners and workout warriors who need to replenish their depleted energy sources.

Like their lunch and dinner offerings, New Shin Restaurant's breakfast dishes have no MSG, are not oily, and are made from the freshest ingredients.

New Shin Restaurant is open for breakfast from 6am to 10am everyday. It's located beside I Love Saipan in Garapan and sits 70 people under COVID-19 guidelines. For lunch and dinner, the Chinese restaurant is open everyday from 12pm to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm.

For more information or for reservations, call 233-8778 or 287-4577. They can also be reached through their Facebook account: New Shin Restaurant.

EU, Britain clash again in latest post-Brexit spat

BRUSSELS (AP)—The European Union said Wednesday that Britain's "unilateral action" on trade rules will breach international law and is threatening legal action as post-Brexit tensions continue to escalate between the two sides.

Commission vice-president Maroš Šefčovič said in a statement that UK's decision to unilaterally extend a grace period on checks for goods moving between Britain and Northern Ireland amounts to "a violation" of the so-called Northern Ireland Protocol.

The Protocol was designed to ensure an open border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic after Brexit.

"This is the second time that the UK government is set to breach international law," Šefčovič said. "This also constitutes a clear departure from the constructive approach that has prevailed up until now."

The EU's anger was sparked by the British government's decision to extend until October a grace period for checks on agri-food entering Northern Ireland that was set to expire at the end of the month.

In September last year, the UK had already upset the 27-nation bloc when it considered—then backpedaled—legislation that would have given Boris Johnson's government the power to override part of the Brexit withdrawal agreement relating to Northern Ireland.

The sensitivity of Northern Ireland's status was underscored earlier this year when the EU threatened to ban shipments of coronavirus vaccines to Northern Ireland as part of moves to shore up the bloc's supply. That would have drawn a hard border on the island of Ireland - exactly the scenario the Brexit deal was crafted to avoid.

Šefčovič held discussions Wednesday with cabinet minister David Frost, the former chief Brexit negotiator now responsible for EU relations.

"Lord Frost explained that the measures announced today, following official-level notification to the Commission earlier this week, were temporary technical steps, which largely continued measures already in place, to provide more time for businesses such as supermarkets and parcel operators to adapt to and implement the new requirements in the Protocol," a UK government spokesperson said.

Before their talks, Šefčovič said he would tell Frost "the European Commission will respond to these developments in accordance with the legal means established by the Withdrawal Agreement and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement."

Dems tighten relief benefits, firm up support for virus bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden and Democrats agreed to tighten eligibility limits for stimulus checks Wednesday, bowing to party moderates as leaders prepared to move their $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill through the Senate.

At the same time, the White House and top Democrats stood by progressives and agreed that the Senate package would retain the $400 weekly emergency unemployment benefits included in the House-passed pandemic legislation. Moderates have wanted to trim those payments to $300 after Republicans have called the bill so heedlessly generous that it would prompt some people to not return to work.

The deal-making underscored the balancing act Democrats face as they try squeezing the massive relief measure through the evenly divided, 50-50 Senate. The package, Biden's signature legislative priority, is his attempt to stomp out the year-old pandemic, revive an economy that's shed 10 million jobs and bring some semblance of normality to countless upended lives.

Democrats have no choice but to broker compromises among themselves, thanks to their mere 10-vote House margin and a Senate they control only with Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote. The party's moderate and progressive factions are competing to use their leverage, but without going so far as to scuttle an effort they all support.

"He's pleased with the progress that is being made with the rescue plan," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said of Biden, reflecting the flexibility he and all Democrats will need to prevail. "He's always said he's open to good ideas."

So far, Republicans have presented a unified front against the bill. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said he wants unanimous GOP opposition.

But Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, didn't rule out breaking ranks and supporting the measure. She told reporters her state's tourism industry has been walloped by the pandemic and said she's talked to administration officials about "how this helps a state like Alaska."

The Senate could begin debating the bill Thursday, but Democrats faced mountains of GOP amendments and other delays that could take days to plow through. The House will have to approve the Senate's version before shipping it to Biden, which Democrats want to do before the last round of emergency jobless benefits run dry March 14.

"I would expect a very long night into the next day and keep going on," said Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., describing GOP plans to force votes.

Under the legislation, individuals earning up to $75,000, and couples up to $150,000, would get $1,400 checks per person. The House-approved version would gradually phase down that amount, with individuals making $100,000 and couples earning $200,000 receiving nothing.

Under Wednesday's agreement, the Senate bill would instead halt the payments completely for individuals making $80,000 and couples earning $160,000, said a Democratic official, who described the agreement only on condition of anonymity.

That means some people who received the last round of $600 relief checks approved in December wouldn't get anything this time. The liberal Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimated that the pared-down Senate eligibility levels means 280 million adults and children would receive stimulus checks, compared to 297 million people under the House plan.

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, perhaps the chamber's most conservative Democrat, has favored lowering the relief check eligibility limits and opposed the House bill's minimum wage increase. He suggested Wednesday he'd back the emerging Senate legislation, saying it "really does have enough good stuff that we should be able to make this work."

In a swipe at moderates, Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., a leader of his chamber's progressives, called the new phase-out of relief checks a "silly and stupid" effort to appease "the one or two people who can hold things up."

Yet asked if the change could threaten the overall bill, Pocan said, "Let's hope they don't screw too many things up. We need to get this done."

Nation

House passes sweeping voting rights bill over GOP opposition

AP
Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and the Democratic Caucus gather to address reporters on H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Democrats passed sweeping voting and ethics legislation Wednesday over unanimous Republican opposition, advancing to the Senate what would be the largest overhaul of the U.S. election law in at least a generation.

House Resolution 1, which touches on virtually every aspect of the electoral process, was approved on a near party-line 220-210 vote. It would restrict partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts, strike down hurdles to voting and bring transparency to a murky campaign finance system that allows wealthy donors to anonymously bankroll political causes.

The bill is a powerful counterweight to voting rights restrictions advancing in Republican-controlled statehouses across the country in the wake of Donald Trump's repeated false claims of a stolen 2020 election. Yet it faces an uncertain fate in the Democratic-controlled Senate, where it has little chance of passing without changes to procedural rules that currently allow Republicans to block it.

The stakes in the outcome are monumental, cutting to the foundational idea that one person equals one vote, and carrying with it the potential to shape election outcomes for years to come. It also offers a test of how hard President Joe Biden and his party are willing to fight for their priorities, as well as those of their voters.

This bill "will put a stop at the voter suppression that we're seeing debated right now," said Rep. Nikema Williams, a new congresswoman who represents the Georgia district that deceased voting rights champion John Lewis held for years. "This bill is the 'Good Trouble' he fought for his entire life."

To Republicans, however, it would give license to unwanted federal interference in states' authority to conduct their own elections—ultimately benefiting Democrats through higher turnout, most notably among minorities.

"Democrats want to use their razor-thin majority not to pass bills to earn voters' trust, but to ensure they don't lose more seats in the next election," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said from the House floor Tuesday.

The measure has been a priority for Democrats since they won their House majority in 2018. But it has taken on added urgency in the wake of Trump's false claims, which incited the deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol in January.

Courts and even Trump's last attorney general, William Barr, found his claims about the election to be without merit. But, spurred on by those lies, state lawmakers across the U.S. have filed more than 200 bills in 43 states that would limit ballot access, according to a tally kept by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.

In Iowa, the legislature voted to cut absentee and in-person early voting, while preventing local elections officials from setting up additional locations to make early voting easier. In Georgia, the House on Monday voted for legislation requiring identification to vote by mail that would also allow counties to cancel early in-person voting on Sundays, when many Black voters cast ballots after church.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court appeared ready to uphold voting restrictions in Arizona, which could make it harder to challenge state election laws in the future.

When asked why proponents sought to uphold the Arizona laws, which limit who can turn in absentee ballots and enable ballots to be thrown out if they are cast in the wrong precinct, a lawyer for the state's Republican Party was stunningly clear.

"Because it puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to Democrats," said attorney Michael Carvin. "Politics is a zero-sum game."

Police uncover 'possible plot' by militia to breach Capitol

WASHINGTON (AP)—Capitol Police say they have uncovered intelligence of a "possible plot" by a militia group to breach the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, nearly two months after a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump stormed the iconic building to try to stop Congress from certifying now-President Joe Biden's victory.

The threat appears to be connected to a far-right conspiracy theory, mainly promoted by supporters of QAnon, that Trump will rise again to power on March 4. That was the original presidential inauguration day until 1933, when it was moved to Jan. 20.

Online chatter identified by authorities included discussions among members of the Three Percenters, an anti-government militia group, concerning possible plots against the Capitol on Thursday, according to two law enforcement officials who were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Members of the Three Percenters were among the extremists who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6.

The announcement comes as the Capitol police and other law enforcement agencies are taking heat from Congress in contentious hearings this week on their handling of the Jan. 6 riot. Police were ill-prepared for the mass of Trump supporters in tactical gear, some armed, and it took hours for National Guard reinforcements to come. By then, rioters had broken and smashed their way into the building and roamed the halls for hours, stalling Congress' certification effort temporarily and sending lawmakers into hiding.

"The United States Capitol Police Department is aware of and prepared for any potential threats towards members of Congress or towards the Capitol complex," the agency said in a statement. "We have obtained intelligence that shows a possible plot to breach the Capitol by an identified militia group on Thursday, March 4." Police did not identify the militia group in the statement.

The U.S. House was abruptly wrapping its work for the week Wednesday night given the threat of violence.

An advisory sent earlier this week to members of Congress by Timothy Blodgett, the acting House sergeant-at-arms, said that the Capitol Police had "no indication that groups will travel to Washington D.C. to protest or commit acts of violence."

But that advisory was updated in a note to lawmakers Wednesday morning. Blodgett wrote that the Capitol Police had received "new and concerning information and intelligence indicating additional interest in the Capitol for the dates of March 4th – 6th by a militia group."

In her testimony to the House panel, acting Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman said her investigators had collected "some concerning intelligence," but declined to provide any details publicly, saying that it was "law enforcement sensitive" and that she would provide a private briefing for the subcommittee members.

Lawmakers, congressional staffers and law enforcement officials are still on edge after the attack last month, even as the security posture around the Capitol remains at an unprecedented level.

On Wednesday, federal agents were seeking to determine whether there was an increase in the number of hotel rooms being rented in Washington, as well as monitoring flights to the area, car rental reservations and any buses being chartered to bring groups into the capital, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person could not publicly discuss details of the security planning and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Cuomo addresses harassment claims, vows to stay in office

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday rejected calls for his resignation in the face of sexual harassment allegations that have threatened his hold on power and damaged his national political standing.

The Democrat, speaking somberly in his first public appearance since three women accused him of inappropriate touching and offensive remarks, apologized and said that he "learned an important lesson" about his behavior around women.

"I now understand that I acted in a way that made people feel uncomfortable," Cuomo said. "It was unintentional and I truly and deeply apologize for it."

Asked about calls for him to step aside, the third-term governor said: "I wasn't elected by politicians, I was elected by the people of the state of New York. I'm not going to resign."

Cuomo acknowledged "sensitivities have changed and behavior has changed" and that what he considers his "customary greeting"—an old-world approach that often involves kisses and hugs—is not acceptable.

But the allegations against the governor go beyond aggressive greetings.

Former aide Lindsey Boylan accuses Cuomo of having harassed her throughout her employment and said he once suggested a game of strip poker aboard his state-owned jet. Another former aide, Charlotte Bennett, said Cuomo once asked her if she ever had sex with older men.

Both women rejected Cuomo's latest apology, doubling down on their disgust after he issued a statement Sunday attempting to excuse his behavior as his way of being "playful."

"How can New Yorkers trust you @NYGovCuomo to lead our state if you 'don't know' when you've been inappropriate with your own staff?" Boylan tweeted.

Cuomo said he will "fully cooperate" with an investigation into the allegations overseen by the state's independently elected attorney general. Attorney General Letitia James, also a Democrat, is selecting an outside law firm to conduct the probe and document its findings in a public report.

Asia

UN: 38 died on deadliest day yet for Myanmar coup opposition

AP
Anti-coup protesters run as one of them discharges a fire extinguisher to counter the impact of tear gas fired by riot policemen in Yangon, Myanmar, Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar security forces were seen firing slingshots at protesters, chasing them down and even brutally beating an ambulance crew in video showing a dramatic escalation of violence against opponents of last month's military coup.

A U.N. official speaking from Switzerland said 38 people had been killed Wednesday, a figure consistent with other reports though accounts are difficult to confirm inside the country. The increasingly deadly violence could galvanize the international community, which has responded fitfully so far.

"Today it was the bloodiest day since the coup happened on Feb. 1. We have today — only today — 38 people died. We have now more than over 50 people died since the coup started" and more have been wounded, the U.N. special envoy for Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, told reporters at U.N. headquarters on Wednesday.

Demonstrators have regularly flooded the streets of cities across the country since the military seized power and ousted the elected government of leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Their numbers have remained high even as security forces have repeatedly fired tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to disperse the crowds, and arrested protesters en masse.

The intensifying standoff is unfortunately familiar in a country with a long history of peaceful resistance to military rule — and brutal crackdowns. The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in the Southeast Asian nation after five decades of military rule.

The Democratic Voice of Burma, an independent television and online news service, also tallied 38 deaths. A toll of at least 34 was compiled by a data analyst in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared for his safety. He also collected information where he could on the victims' names, ages, hometowns, and where and how they were killed —an effort he said he had made to honor those who were killed for their heroic resistance.

The Associated Press was unable to independently confirm most of the reported deaths, but several square with online postings.

According to the data analyst's list, most were in Yangon, where 18 died. In the central city of Monywa, which has turned out huge crowds, eight deaths were reported. Three deaths were reported in Mandalay, the country's second-biggest city, and two in Salin, a town in Magwe region. Mawlamyine, in the country's southeast, and Myingyan and Kalay, both in central Myanmar, each had a single death.

As part of the crackdown, security forces have also arrested hundreds of people, including journalists. On Saturday, at least eight journalists, including Thein Zaw of The Associated Press, were detained. A video showed he had moved out of the way as police charged down a street at protesters, but then was seized by police officers, who handcuffed him and held him briefly in a chokehold before marching him away.

He has been charged with violating a public safety law that could see him imprisoned for up to three years.

The escalation of the crackdown has led to increased diplomatic efforts to resolve Myanmar's political crisis — but there appear to be few viable options. It's not yet clear if Wednesday's soaring death toll could change the dynamic.

The U.N. Security Council is expected to hold a closed meeting on the situation on Friday, council diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to make the information public before the official announcement. The United Kingdom requested the meeting, they said.

Still, any kind of coordinated action at the United Nations will be difficult since two permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia, would almost certainly veto it. Some countries have imposed or are considering imposing their own sanctions.

The U.N. special envoy, Schraner Burgener, who supports sanctions, said she receives some 2,000 messages per day from people inside Myanmar, many "who are really desperate to see action from the international community."

South Korea's first known transgender soldier found dead

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's first known transgender soldier, who protested the military's decision last year to discharge her for undergoing gender reassignment surgery, was found dead at her home on Wednesday.

Shin Jeong-hwan, a fire department official in the central city of Cheongju, said rescue workers visited the home of Byun Hui-su after local mental health counselors reported that she had been out of contact for days.

The cause of death wasn't immediately known. Shin said the decomposition of the body indicated she had been dead for days.

Byun, who had been a staff sergeant and tank driver, pleaded to be allowed to continue serving as a female soldier after the army discharged her in January 2020, triggering criticism by human rights advocates who saw the decision as discriminatory.

She said she had sex reassignment surgery in Thailand in November 2019 after suffering depression over her sexual identity for an extended period.

South Korea prohibits transgender people from joining the military and the army rejected Byun's petition for reinstatement in July last year.

Farmers in Fukushima plant indigo to rebuild devastated town

MINAMISOMA, Japan (AP)—Because of radiation released by the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster a decade ago, farmers in nearby Minamisoma weren't allowed to grow crops for two years.

After the restriction was lifted, two farmers, Kiyoko Mori and Yoshiko Ogura, found an unusual way to rebuild their lives and help their destroyed community. They planted indigo and soon began dying fabric with dye produced from the plants.

"Dyeing lets us forget the bad things" for a while, Mori said. "It's a process of healing for us."

The massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, caused three of the reactors at the nuclear plant to melt and wrecked more than just the farmers' livelihoods. The homes of many people in Minamisoma, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the plant, were destroyed by the tsunami. The disaster killed 636 town residents, and tens of thousands of others left to start new lives.

Mori and Ogura believed that indigo dyeing could help people in the area recover.

Mori said they were concerned at first about consuming locally grown food, but felt safe raising indigo because it wouldn't be eaten. They checked the radiation level of the indigo leaves and found no dangerous amount.

Ten years after the disaster, Mori and Ogura are still engaged in indigo dyeing but have different missions.

To Mori, it has become a tool for building a strong community in a devastated town and for fighting unfounded rumors that products from Fukushima are still contaminated. She favors the typical indigo dyeing process that requires some chemical additives.

But Ogura has chosen to follow a traditional technique that uses fermentation instead as a way to send a message against dangers of modern technology highlighted by nuclear power.

Mori formed a group called Japan Blue which holds workshops that have taught indigo dyeing to more than 100 people each year. She hopes the project will help rebuild the dwindling town's sense of community.

Despite a new magnitude 7.3 earthquake that recently hit the area, the group did not cancel its annual exhibition at a community center that served as an evacuation center 10 years ago.

"Every member came to the exhibition, saying they can clean up the debris in their houses later," Mori said.

Ogura, who is not a member of the group, feels that a natural process is important because the nuclear accident showed that relying on advanced technology for efficiency while ignoring its negative aspects can lead to bad consequences.

"I really suffered during the nuclear accident," Ogura said. "We escaped frantically in the confusion. I felt I was doing something similar again" by using chemicals.

"We seek too much in the way of many varieties of beautiful colors created with the use of chemicals. We once thought our lives were enriched by it, but I started feeling that wasn't the case," she said. "I want people to know what the real natural color looks like."

Organic indigo dyes take more time and closer attention. Ogura first ferments chopped indigo leaves with water for a month and then mixes the result with lye which is formed on the surface of a mixture of hot water and ashes. It has to be kept at about 20 degrees C (68 degrees F) and stirred three times a day.

Part of the beauty of the process, Ogura says, is that it's hard to predict what color will be produced.

With the support of city officials, Ogura started making silk face masks dyed with organic indigo.

She used to run an organic restaurant where she served her own vegetables before the disaster, but now runs a guesthouse with her husband in which visitors can try organic indigo dyeing.

Just 700 meters (2,300 feet) from Ogura's house, countless black bags filled with weakly contaminated debris and soil are piled along the roadside. They have been there since after the disaster, according to Ogura's husband, Ryuichi. Other piles are scattered around the town.

"The government says it's not harmful to leave them there. But if they really think it's not harmful, they should take them to Tokyo and keep them near them," he said.

The radiation waste stored in the town is scheduled to be moved to a medium-term storage facility by March next year, a town official said.

World

Virus surge forces Sao Paulo to shut as Buenos Aires reopens

AP
A patient suspected of having COVID-19 is received at the HRAN Hospital in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

SAO PAULO (AP)—A swell of COVID-19 cases is halting samba steps in Brazil's biggest metropolis while Argentina's capital tiptoes its way back to the tango floor.

The two biggest cities in each of the neighboring South American countries are headed in opposite directions, reflecting how those that loosen restrictions despite warnings from scientists see a spike in the pandemic while others that keep social distancing measures in place are able to reopen their economies sooner.

Sao Paulo, home to almost 12 million people, is bracing for the worst two weeks yet in the pandemic and the growing risk that its once-resilient health care system will collapse, Gov. João Doria told reporters Wednesday. More than 75% of the city's intensive-care beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients and some wards—like those of the private Albert Einstein hospital—are full for the first time.

Doria announced that the entire state, where 46 million people reside, on Saturday will face the highest level of restrictions to arrest the virus' spread. That means closure of all bars, restaurants, shopping malls and any other establishment deemed non-essential until at least March 19.

Meanwhile, the nearly 3 million residents of Buenos Aires are enjoying an easing of their restrictions, with authorization to attend movie theaters taking effect this week. On Wednesday, official figures showed just 26% of intensive-care beds were occupied by COVID-19 patients. The low hospitalization rate also enabled local authorities in mid-February to reopen bars and restaurants until 2 a.m.--something long sought in a city famous for its all-hours culture.

That means Buenos Aires' famed steakhouses are reigniting their fires, while counterparts in Sao Paulo extinguish theirs.

Buenos Aires' casinos also reopened at the end of 2020, and authorities are discussing whether the soccer-crazy city will be able to return to the stadiums soon. In Brazil, despite Bolsonaro's push to allow fans back, no local authorities are seriously considering opening stadiums. The 48,000-seater NeoQuimica arena on the east side of Sao Paulo is being used as a vaccination post.

Some good news from the Sao Paulo region came on Tuesday, when soccer great Pelé received his first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The 80-year-old posted the news on his social media channels.

"The pandemic is not over yet. We must keep discipline to preserve lives until many people have taken the vaccine," the three-time World Cup winner said. "When you go out please don't forget your mask and maintain social distance."

His plea is important--even one year after the pandemic began--as Bolsonaro continues to cast doubt on the effectiveness of masks.

The distance between the two nations has seemingly widened during the pandemic, with Bolsonaro and Argentina's Alberto Fernández adopting opposite tacks in their handling of the crisis. The former downplayed the disease's risks and has insisted on keeping the economy churning, while the latter has taken a more cautious approach.

Fernández imposed one of the longest quarantines in the world between March and October, despite risks of damaging an economy already in a recession.

Over the past week, Brazil has recorded 35 COVID-19 deaths per million residents, almost triple that of Argentina.

Troubles in Sao Paulo worsened after furtive Carnival celebrations in mid-February. Though street celebrations and parades were canceled, many paulistas, as residents are known, traveled or joined unmasked gatherings. The city declined to allow days off work traditionally allowed during the Carnival period, in a bid to keep people from partying.

Izidoro Silveira, 34, got a job waiting tables at a pizzeria in downtown Sao Paulo two months ago, after almost a full year unemployed. He's upset about his restaurant's imminent shutdown.

Tactical shift: Europe seeks vaccine 'overdrive' to catch up

BERLIN (AP)—Slow off the blocks in the race to immunize its citizens against COVID-19, Germany faces an unfamiliar problem: a glut of vaccines and not enough arms to inject them into.

Like other countries in the European Union, its national vaccine campaign lags far behind that of Israel, Britain and the United States. On Wednesday the government gave in to growing calls in this country of 83 million to ditch the rulebook that many have blamed for holding Germany back.

"We want to use all flexibility," Chancellor Angela Merkel said after lengthy negotiations with state governors in Berlin on adjusting pandemic measures.

Germany will follow the lead of other countries in extending the length of time between first and second shots as much as possible, allowing more people to get the initial dose and cutting the number held back to a minimum.

After initially limiting the AstraZeneca vaccine to people under 65, an independent expert committee is likely to recommend lifting that restrictions, said Merkel.

Vaccines that aren't taken up by those they're offered to will be made available to others, too, she added.

The measures sweep aside many of the rigid rules German officials have repeated in recent weeks—including Merkel, who said recently that at 66, she would not be taking the AstraZeneca vaccine because it wasn't approved for her.

The decision comes as Germany's stockpile of AstraZeneca vaccine doses looked set to top 2 million this week due to the restrictions it had imposed, even as many in the country wonder why they aren't being offered a shot.

Germans watched with morbid fascination in January as Britain trained an army of volunteers to deliver coronavirus shots, then marveled that the U.K.—hit far worse by the pandemic than Germany—managed to vaccinate more than half a million people on some days.

The U.S. drive-thru inoculation centers and the COVID-19 shots given out in American grocery store pharmacies drew bafflement in Germany—that is, until the country's own plans for orderly vaccine appointments at specialized centers were overwhelmed by the demand.

Britain and the United States "had a much more pragmatic approach" to vaccination, said Hans-Martin von Gaudecker, a professor of economics at the University of Bonn. "What normally makes German bureaucracy stolid and reliable becomes an obstacle in a crisis and costs lives."

France changed tactics on the AstraZeneca vaccine earlier this week, allowing some people over 65 to get the shot after initially restricting its use to younger people. Health Minister Olivier Veran said the shot would soon also be available to people over 50 with health problems that make them more vulnerable.

WORLD BRIEFS

Greece: Thousands spend night outdoors after powerful quake

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Fearful of returning to their homes, thousands of people in central Greece were spending the night outdoors late Wednesday after a powerful earthquake, felt across the region, damaged homes and public buildings. The shallow, magnitude-6.0 quake struck near the central city of Larissa. One man was hurt by falling debris but no serious injuries were reported. Officials reported structural damage, mainly to old houses and buildings that saw walls collapse or crack. One of them was a primary school, stone-built in 1938, in the quake-hit village of Damasi where 63 students were attending classes. "The teachers kept their cool and the pupils stuck to the emergency drill, and everyone got out okay," headmaster Grigoris Letsios said while on a video call with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. "The building will be condemned now...We'll need a new school."

Czechs seek help abroad to treat their COVID-19 patients

PRAGUE (AP)—With hospitals in some parts of the Czech Republic filled up, the country has turned to Germany and other European countries with a request for help. The Czech Republic, one of the hardest-hit European Union countries, has been facing a surge of new cases attributed to a highly infectious coronavirus variant that is believed to originate in Britain. Interior Minister Jan Hamacek said on Wednesday neighboring Germany has offered dozens of beds in its hospitals to treat Czech COVID-19 patients. He said 19 of them were immediately ready. Hamacek said that Switzerland was another country ready to help with 20 beds in its hospitals while offering to take care of the transport of the patients. Talks were also underway with Poland to provide around 200 beds.

Canada vaccine panel recommends 4 months between COVID doses

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP)—A national panel of vaccine experts in Canada recommended Wednesday that provinces extend the interval between the two doses of a COVID-19 shot to quickly inoculate more people, as the prime minister expressed optimism that vaccination timelines could be sped up. In laying out its new guidelines, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization said extending the dose interval to four months would create opportunities to protect the entire adult population against the virus within a short time frame. As many as 80% of Canadians over 16 could receive a single dose by the end of June simply with the expected supply of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, the panel said. Second doses would begin to be administered in July as more shipments arrive, the panel said, noting that 55 million doses are expected to be delivered in the third quarter of the year. In comparison, the federal government previously said 38% of people would receive two doses by the end of June.

Off The Wall

Cat that vanished 15 years ago is reunited with owner

AP

This photo provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control shows Brandy, a brown tabby cat, that was reunited on Monday, Feb. 22, 2021, with her owner, Charles, (he would only give his first name) after she went astray for 15 years, are seen together at the Palmdale, Calif., animal care center.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A cat that went astray about 15 years ago has been reunited, older and maybe wiser, with its owner.

Brandy, a brown tabby, was reunited Monday afternoon with Charles, who adopted her as a 2-month-old kitten in 2005.

"It's amazing. I think it's unbelievable," he said Thursday.

"I saw her, I picked her up and she started to purr and it was very emotional," Charles said. "It was nice to have her in my arms again."

"I did break down and cry because I thought about all of the years I lost from her," said Charles, a computer technician who did not want his last name used.

Brandy was found Sunday in Palmdale, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) from where Charles lives in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles.

He said that Brandy strayed only a few months after he adopted her.

"She went outside in the afternoon to our backyard," he said. But when it got dark and he went to bring her inside, she wasn't there.

Charles drove around looking for her, checked animal shelters and put up signs without any luck.

Man accused of QAnon vandalism at 'America's Stonehenge'

SALEM, N.H. (AP)—Police have made an arrest following a 15-month-long investigation into vandalism at a group of rock configurations in New Hampshire called "America's Stonehenge."

Mark Russo, 51, of Swedesboro, New Jersey, has been charged with one count of felony criminal mischief, accused of defacing the stone in Salem in September 2019. A lawyer entered a not guilty plea on his behalf Tuesday.

Police said the rock tablet appeared to have been damaged by a power tool. It was carved with "WWG1WGA" and "IAMMARK." Police said the first stands for "Where We Go One, We Go All," a motto affiliated with the QAnon conspiracy theory.

An 18-inch (45-centimeter) tall wooden cross was found suspended between two trees, and attached to the cross were several photographs and handdrawn images. Police arrested Russo after finding images of the stone and Russo online and linking to him an "iammark" Twitter account with a reference to "a few improvements" made to the site. Images on the cross also were linked to Russo.

Bail was set at $3,000 cash for Russo, who is scheduled for a hearing on April 21. An email seeking comment from Russo's lawyer was sent Tuesday.

America's Stonehenge, which features cave-like, granite enclosures, has drawn believers who say it's 1,000 or more years old, and skeptics who say the evidence suggests it was the work of a 19th century shoemaker.

In Israel, mayo provides miracle for turtles

MICHMORET, Israel (AP)—When it comes to saving sea turtles, Israeli rescuers have discovered that mayonnaise is a miracle.

Employees at Israel's National Sea Turtle Rescue Center are treating endangered green sea turtles affected by a devastating oil spill that has coated Israel's coast with thick black tar.

The spill, which Israel's Nature and Parks Authority has called one of the country's worst ecological disasters on record, has coated most of Israel's 120 miles (195 kilometers) of Mediterranean coastline with sticky tar. It has caused extensive damage to wildlife, including sea turtles.

Guy Ivgy, a medical assistant at the Sea Turtle Rescue Center in Michmoret, north of Tel Aviv, said 11 turtles are being treated. The center is run by Israel's Nature and Parks Authority.

"They came to us full of tar. All their trachea from inside and outside was full of tar," he said.

Workers have been removing the toxic substance from the reptiles' airways and found a creative way to flush it out of their digestive tracks.

"We continue to feed them substances like mayonnaise, which practically clean the system and break down the tar," Ivgy said. The recovery process is expected to take a week or two, after which the turtles are expected to be released back into the wild.

Thousands of volunteers and clean-up crews have mobilized to remove tar from Israel's beaches, a task that is expected to take months.

Israel's Environmental Protection Ministry says it is investigating the cause of the oil spill.

In celebration of his new life

Raymond John Mettao Castro

Lovingly known as Chief or Apuyol

May 4, 1977- February 20, 2021

In his new life, he now joins:

Grandparents: †Juan Manibusan Castro/†Soledad Pangelinan Tenorio
†Bonifacio Faibar Mettao/†Francisca Taisacan Fitipol

Aunties and Uncles: †Teresita DLG(Vegas), †Henry Hudson, †Jesus L. Castro, †Robert Tenorio, †Joaquin T. Castro, †Loudinela F. Castro, †Steven Van Winkle, †Luis T. Castro, †Lydia F. Castro, †Rosa T. Castro, †Vicente Mendiola, †Vicente F. Mettao, †Donicia F. Mettao, †Martin I. Lifoifoi

Love of his life: †Barbara R. Suel

He will live in the hearts and lives of his:

Parents: Ramon Tenorio Castro
Rita Mettao Castro

Siblings: Rudolfo Jose (RJ) Mettao Castro,
Rita Juana (Princess) C./Jesus T. (RJ) Tesero and family
Raegina Jazmine (Leiaschingi) Mettao Castro

Reared Children: Eli'zaiah Bonifacio (Bochu) Mettao Castro
Evi'lei Bianca L. (Evi) Mettao Castro

Father's Siblings and their families: †Teresita DLG(Vegas)/†Jesus L. Castro and family, †Robert/Ignacia Tenorio and family, Juan T./Ana (Anning) S. Castro and family, †Joaquin T./Mary M. Castro and (†Auntie Lou) family, Teresita C./Rod (Boy) San Pedro and (†Steven Van Winkle) family, †Luis T./†Margarita DLG. Castro and family, Rudolfo T./Qiulan Castro and (†Auntie Lydia) family,†Rose C. Enriquez/Paul Enriquez and (†Vicente Mendiola) family, Margarita C./Sebastian Matagolai and family, Jose T./Alice C. Castro and family

Mother's Siblings and their families: †Vincente F./Magdalena I. Mettao and family, †Donicia M./†Martin I. Lifoifoi and family, Jose F. Mettao, Alex F./Mae K. Mettao and family, Emiliana F. Mettao, Antonia F. Mettao, Joaquin F. Mettao, and Patricinia M./James A. (Jun) Pua and family

And extended families

Daily Mass

Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 6:00AM
San Roque Church at 6:00AM
Santa Remedios Church at 6:00PM
St. Jude at 6:00PM

Mass of Christian Burial

You're welcome to say your final farewells at Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Monday, March 8, 2021 from 8:00AM-10:00AM followed by Mass of Christian Burial

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghillossow, and Thank you for all the love, support, and prayers in the loss of our beloved son and brother.

Science & Technology

Google ends sale of ads using individual web tracking data

LONDON (AP)—Google says it won't develop new ways to follow individual users across the internet after it phases out existing ad-tracking technology from its Chrome browser, a change that could shake up the online advertising industry.

Google says it's taking the move to protect user privacy. It's part of a broader shift in the industry as marketers such as Apple and regulators in the U.K., U.S. and elsewhere increasingly are seeking ways to phase out more egregious data collection practices.

Still, there are concerns that it will add to the tech giant's already dominant power in online advertising. And the change won't affect Google's largest advertising money-makers: Search and YouTube.

"There's a growing idea that if you can't persuade consumers to part with their data willingly, you probably don't deserve it," said Brian Wieser, global president of business intelligence at media agency GroupM. "Consumers are more aware of their data being used unwittingly. Brands (thinking long term) are asking 'do you really want to irritate consumers with messages that create a perception of privacy being violated in some form?' No."

The digital giant already said it would remove so-called third party cookies from Chrome. Those are snippets of code used by advertisers to record users' web-browsing histories in order to target personalized ads. Third-party cookies have long been a key tool for marketers to deliver targeted ads, but they've also been a source of privacy concerns since they trace users across the Internet in ways they might not be aware of.

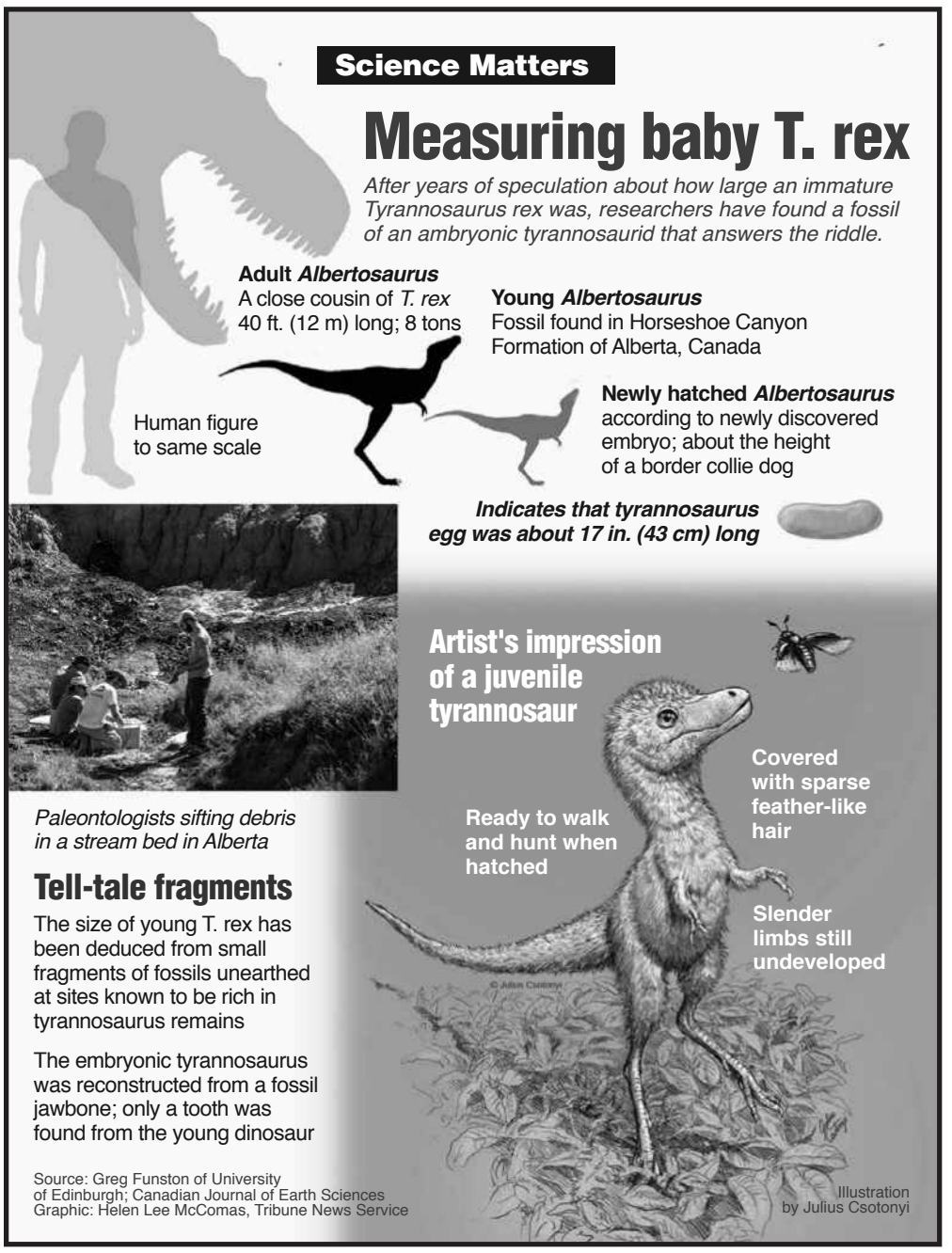
Google is under growing pressure to pay for information that, for two decades, the search provider snipped from the web—and made a mint from—without paying a penny. DREAMSTIME.COM/TNS

On Wednesday, the company said it won't replace those cookies with another way of tracking individuals. Instead, Google proposes grouping together web users with similar interests and keeping web histories private on user devices. Google can still track users through its own services like Search or Maps.

"If digital advertising doesn't evolve to address the growing concerns people have about their privacy and how their personal identity is being used, we risk the future of the free and open web," David Temkin, Google's director of product management for ads privacy and trust, said in a blog post.

Temkin said the company continues to get questions on whether it will join others in the ad tech industry that plan to replace third-party cookies with alternative user-level identifiers.

"Today, we're making explicit that once third-party cookies are phased out, we will not build alternate identifiers to track individuals as they browse across the web, nor will we use them in our products," he said.


Science Matters
Measuring baby T. rex
After years of speculation about how large an immature Tyrannosaurus rex was, researchers have found a fossil of an ambryonic tyrannosaurid that answers the riddle.
Adult Albertosaurus
A close cousin of T. rex
40 ft. (12 m) long; 8 tons
Young Albertosaurus
Fossil found in Horseshoe Canyon Formation of Alberta, Canada
Human figure to same scale
Newly hatched Albertosaurus
according to newly discovered embryo; about the height of a border collie dog
Indicates that tyrannosaurus egg was about 17 in. (43 cm) long
Paleontologists sifting debris in a stream bed in Alberta
Artist's impression of a juvenile tyrannosaur
Covered with sparse feather-like hair
Ready to walk and hunt when hatched
Slender limbs still undeveloped
Tell-tale fragments
The size of young T. rex has been deduced from small fragments of fossils unearthed at sites known to be rich in tyrannosaurus remains
The embryonic tyrannosaurus was reconstructed from a fossil jawbone; only a tooth was found from the young dinosaur
Source: Greg Funston of University of Edinburgh; Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service
Illustration by Julius Csotonyi

SpaceX Starship lands upright, then explodes in latest test

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—SpaceX's futuristic Starship looked like it aced a touchdown Wednesday, but then exploded on the landing pad with so much force that it was hurled into the air.

The failure occurred just minutes after SpaceX declared success. Two previous test flights crash-landed in fireballs.

The full-scale prototype of Elon Musk's envisioned Mars ship soared more than 6 miles (10 kilometers) after lifting off from the southern tip of Texas on Wednesday. It descended horizontally over the Gulf of Mexico and then flipped upright just in time to land.

The shiny bullet-shaped rocketship remained intact this time at touchdown, prompting SpaceX commentator John Insprucker to declare, "third time's a charm as the saying goes" before SpaceX ended its webcast of the test.

But then the Starship exploded and was tossed in the air, before slamming down into the ground in flames.

There was no immediate comment from SpaceX on what went wrong. But Musk looked on the bright side in a tweet: "Starship 10 landed in one piece! RIP SN10, honorable discharge."

He added: "SpaceX team is doing great work! One day, the true measure of success will be that Starship flights are commonplace."

Musk plans to use Starships to send people to the moon and Mars.

The last two prototypes reached a similarly high altitude in December and February, but slammed into the ground at Boca Chica, Texas, and exploded.

Each of these last three test flights lasted 6 1/2 minutes.

Don't miss calls because the phone didn't ring or vibrate

Q: My iPhone XS, now 26 months old, has a ringing problem, even though it's never been dropped or damaged. The phone often doesn't ring or vibrate when I receive a call. So, unless I'm looking at the screen when the call arrives, I miss it. But this doesn't happen on every call. A Verizon tech called me once and the phone rang, then he called me again and it didn't ring. The tech said he'd never seen anything like it. The only thing that temporarily solves the problem is to change ringtones, and that fix only lasts for one or two calls.

I've tried the obvious solutions, such as making sure the ring/silent switch on the side of the phone is turned on, and that no one is blocked from calling. What can I do?

A: There are a few changes to the settings you can try. If they don't work, you may need to have the phone repaired or replaced. But first, try:

■ If you have installed any new apps lately, uninstall them to see if they have been interfering with your phone ringing.

■ Make sure the phone isn't stuck in headphone mode. If it is, the ringtone may be being "sent" to headphones or external speakers that aren't connected to the phone (see tinyurl.com/4sf9282t).

■ Turn off "Do not disturb mode." It keeps calls from ringing your phone unless the caller has been added to an exception list. Go to Settings, click Do Not Disturb and make sure the top button is off.

■ Listen to your ringtone to rule out sound file corruption. In Settings, click "Sounds & Haptics," then "Ringtone" and then the selected tone. Also check any custom ringtones you use for different callers.

■ Check to see if the phone's speaker needs repair. Open Settings and select "Sounds & Haptics." On the sliding "ringer and alerts" control, slide the button back and forth several times. Just touching the button should make your standard ring tone play, and by dragging it back and forth you should make the sound softer and louder. If you don't hear any sound, or if the button on the control is dim, your phone's speaker may not be working properly.

If none of the above help you, the phone may be damaged in ways you can't fix. Note that you are beyond the one-year warranty that came with the phone. But you may have repair/replacement coverage if you have purchased an "AppleCare+" extended warranty, or if you bought a Verizon insurance plan. For the best Verizon Wireless technical advice, consult a corporate store rather than an "authorized retailer" (search Google for "Verizon corporate store Twin Cities").

Q: My girlfriend in San Jose, Calif., is being harassed by a guy who has gained access to her home Wi-Fi network. This has been going on for three years. What can I do about it?

A: There are many ways an unscrupulous person can gain access to a Wi-Fi network. They range from guessing passwords to compromising wireless routers or home automation devices. See tinyurl.com/vmywvwzx for an overview of how to improve the security of a home network. In addition, tell your girlfriend to download and run the free version of Malwarebytes (tinyurl.com/ysnm7v7p) to make sure there's no malicious software on her computer.

TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Star Tribune of Minneapolis. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

Life & Style

Dr. Oz aids police in resuscitating man at Newark airport

The television personality known simply as Dr. Oz gave details Wednesday about a tense real-life scene in which he helped police save a man's life at Newark Liberty International Airport as anxious spectators looked on.

The incident occurred late Monday night when Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Officer Jeffrey Croissant saw the 60-year-old man fall to the floor near a baggage claim area.

Croissant called for backup, and began performing CPR immediately on the unidentified man, who wasn't breathing and didn't appear to have a pulse, according to the Port Authority.

When another person came over to help, Croissant didn't immediately recognize it was Mehmet Oz, the cardiac surgeon and longtime host of TV's "Dr. Oz Show," who happened to be nearby.

"The gentleman had face-planted, and there was a pool of blood like a murder scene," Oz told The Associated Press. Oz said he tried to rouse him, but the man had no pulse and his face had begun to turn purple.

Croissant performed CPR on the man while Oz worked to clear his airway with a face pack and a tongue-depressing oral airway device. Three other officers brought oxygen and a defibrillator for the man, who eventually regained a pulse and was taken to a hospital for evaluation.

"What better help than to have a cardiac surgeon?" Croissant said afterward.

Oz said that he first became aware of the man's distress while waiting for baggage at the luggage carousel and his daughter started yelling "Daddy, daddy, daddy!" Oz said his fatherly alarm bells went off thinking she was in trouble, then switched into emergency gear when he saw the man.

The defibrillator "diagnosed that his heart had stopped, as I had thought was the case when I couldn't get a pulse," Oz said. "It told us to step away. And you've seen those movies where the patient gets shocked and they jerk off the ground? That's exactly what happened. Usually, the heart doesn't start again ... in this case, like the movies, his heart started."

Oz said the man's face began regaining its color, and he awakened.

"The spectators, you could feel the prayers and energy change," he said. "Instead of watching a trainwreck it was a miracle."

Oz has come to the aid of injured people on numerous occasions.

Catherine Zeta-Jones joins Michael Sheen in 'Prodigal Son'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Catherine Zeta-Jones was already a fan of "Prodigal Son," so when the chance came to join the show, she jumped, lured by the prospect of working alongside Michael Sheen.

The Welsh actors were born in cities about an hour apart and moved in similar circles during their youth without ever knowing each other. She was born in Swansea and Sheen was born in Newport seven months apart.

"We have all these mutual friends, but we've never crossed. My mom and dad know his dad," she said Tuesday in a virtual Television Critics Association panel. "It's bizarre. That was, of course, a huge pull for me."

Zeta-Jones joins Fox's "Prodigal Son" in Tuesday's episode, directed by co-star Lou Diamond Phillips. Previously, the Oscar winner had done guest episodes and appeared in TV movies and miniseries, but never a regular series role.

She plays Dr. Vivian Capshaw and Alan Cumming appears in two episodes as a cocky Europol agent.

"It's a family drama with a twist of danger and it's a dark family," Zeta-Jones said. "I gravitate to kind of dark material."

Sheen's presence increased the comfort level for Zeta-Jones to come onto a set where the cast and crew had already been together for a season. He plays an incarcerated serial killer surgeon.

"As soon as Lou shouted, 'Cut,' Michael and I went into inside jokes, Tommy Cooper impressions," she said, referring to the British comedian.

Phillips said, "She came like a team player, she came to play. It was seamless."

Dolly Parton on her 50th Grammy nod: 'It's always special'

NEW YORK (AP)—It's been 51 years since Dolly Parton earned her first Grammy nomination, and this year the national treasure who has won nine Grammys throughout her career is competing for her 50th honor.

Parton's first Grammy nomination was at the 1970 show for "Just Someone I Used to Know," a duet with Porter Wagoner. Nine years later she won her first gramophone for "Here You Come Again," her 19th solo album and first to go platinum.

This year she's nominated for best contemporary Christian music performance/song for "There Was Jesus," her collaboration with Christian rock singer Zach Williams. Parton won in the same category last year for her guest appearance on the remix of "God Only Knows" by Christian duo for KING & COUNTRY.

"It's always special. You always love to be acknowledged," Parton said of achieving her 50th nod, though she quickly added: "Like I've always said, 'I don't work for awards and rewards.'"

Parton is the second-most nominated woman in Grammy history, only behind Beyoncé, who has 79 nods and 24 wins. The country icon earned the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award a decade ago.

Among her wins, Parton picked up two Grammys for the massive hit "9 to 5" and another for "Trio," her first first collaborative album with Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt. An updated version of "Jolene" won Parton and a cappella group Pentatonix a trophy. At the 1983 show, the legend scored a nomination for a re-recording of "I Will Always Love You," which she wrote and originally released in 1974, and a collaborative performance of the song with Vince Gill earned a nomination at the 1996 show—two years after Whitney Houston's famous rendition of the song won two Grammys, including record of the year.

Miss Universe competition to air live from Florida in May

NEW YORK (AP)—After a year and a half, the Miss Universe competition will return with a live telecast on May 16.

The 69th Miss Universe event will be held at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

The last Miss Universe pageant was in December 2019 and its winner, Zozibini Tunzi of South Africa, has worn the crown longer than anyone else.

Paula M. Shugart, the president of the Miss Universe Organization, said in a press release Wednesday that they've spent months planning a safe competition. It will follow similar guidelines as November's 2020 Miss USA competition held in Memphis.

It's still under consideration whether a limited audience will be permitted to watch in person.

The Miss Universe competition will air in more than 160 territories and countries across the globe. In the U.S. it will air in Spanish on Telemundo and the English-language broadcasters will soon be announced.

Catriona Gray of the Philippines, left, reacts as she is crowned the new Miss Universe 2018 by Miss Universe 2017 Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters during the final round of the 67th Miss Universe competition in Bangkok, Thailand, on Dec. 17, 2018. AP

Mother's intuition warns of trouble under her roof

DEAR ABBY: I suspect that something has been going on with my husband and our daughter-in-law. My husband has become obsessed with her, and they both seem to become nervous when they are around me at the same time. My husband is always checking to see when I'm leaving.

My son and daughter-in-law and their three kids live in our duplex, but my son isn't home most of the day. Should I be concerned about what's going on with them? Everything in me is telling me something is not right.

WORRIED IN WISCONSIN

DEAR WORRIED: I hope you are wrong, but if "everything in you" is telling you something is not right, listen to your intuition. Continue monitoring the situation and keep a journal of your observations.

If your marital relationship with your husband has changed, it's a red flag. Talk to him about it. It may take the services of a licensed marriage and family therapist to get your marriage back on track. Share the journal with your therapist during some of the sessions, or with your attorney, if the need arises.

DEAR ABBY: My mom died five years ago. I didn't talk to her the last few months before her death because of the extreme stress she put me under. I finally told my brother it was his turn to deal with her because she had always been sweet to him. I dealt with her issues for 40 years and could no longer continue. Mom was greedy, self-centered and narcissistic. She caused many issues between my brother and me.

My question concerns her ashes. I have them. My brother wanted nothing to do with them, and I don't know how to dispose of them. I have considered spreading them in the mountains since she liked camping and fishing, but I don't know if it is legal. Otherwise, they will sit in my basement forever.

NEEDS A SOLUTION

DEAR NEEDS: Contact the funeral home or crematorium that handled your mother's remains and ask what the rules are in your state about the disposition of ashes. Because rules differ in different states, counties, etc., the people there would be in the best position to assist you.

DEAR ABBY: I have a relationship problem I hope you can help me with. I have loved this woman for years. We grew up together. We parted because I had to move away to Japan.

Well, a few years ago, we met again. We began to communicate, and all my feelings for her rushed back after all these years. I know she doesn't feel the same way about me. How can I let her know how bad it hurts, this unrequited love?

SMITTEN IN THE WEST

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

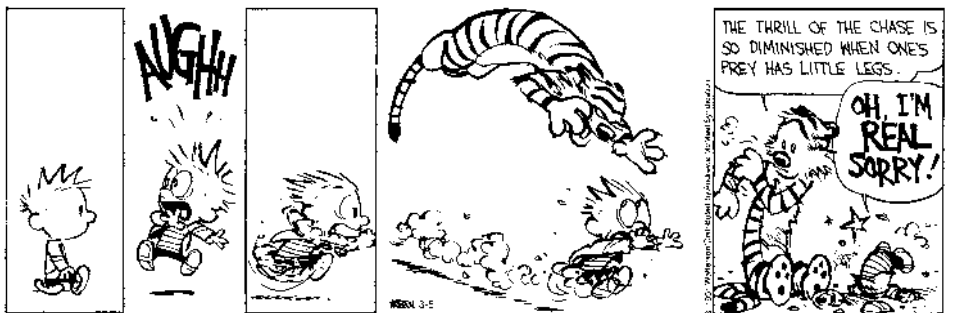
DEAR SMITTEN: I don't think that's such a good idea. Knowing this woman doesn't reciprocate your feelings, do you really think informing her that "all those feelings have rushed back" will endear you? It may cause her embarrassment. You will be happier if you stop dwelling on your unrequited love from the past, resolve to live in the present and, from now on, look for companionship from candidates who are emotionally available.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

NEW SWEATER?
I'M NOT WEARING A SWEATER
THEN YOU REALLY DO HAVE A CAT HAIR PROBLEM
I PREFER TO THINK OF IT AS "CAT CHIC"
JIM DAVIS 3-5

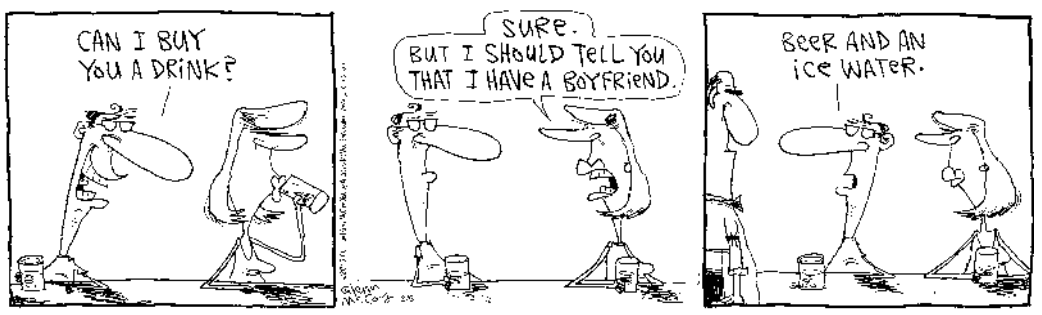
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I DO FEEL BAD FOR THE KIDS.
ME TOO.
SNOW DAYS WERE THE BEST! DO E-CLASSES MAKE THEM A THING OF THE PAST??
WHAT IF THE TOWN'S INTERNET WERE TO MYSTERIOUSLY...
ADAM!
3-5

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

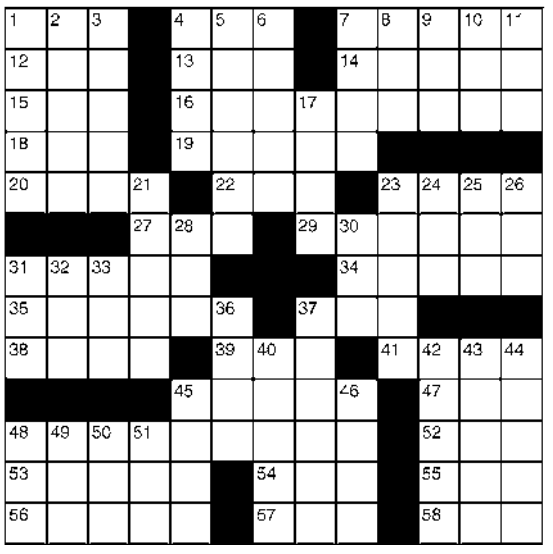
ACROSS
1 "CSI" find
4 West of Hollywood
7 Place for a watch
12 "Shiny Happy People" band
13 Non-Rx
14 Book after Daniel
15 French assent
16 Pop up in someone's picture
18 Assoc.
19 Justice Sotomayor
20 Challah unit
22 Chic, to Austin Powers
23 Pearl Harbor site
27 "Norma —"
29 Aerie builders
31 Farm units
34 Andean beast
35 Partner in marriage
37 Fr. holy woman
38 Full house, e.g.
39 Make lace
41 Colorless
45 Discard
47 French article
48 Jaw-dropping shocker
52 Ad- — (improvise)
53 Start
54 Hearty brew
55 Punk-rock subgenre
56 Painter of ballerinas
57 Nine-digit ID issuer
58 Enervate

DOWN
1 Slobber
2 Prefix with surgeon
3 Spanish girlfriend
4 Floor cleaners
5 Not on the road
6 — Lodge
7 Horse's halter?
8 Filch
9 Equi-
10 Religious sch.
11 Indent key
17 Ocean motion
21 Sigmund or Anna
23 Gawked at
24 Carte lead-in
25 Height of fashion?
26 Dos Passos trilogy
28 Ninny
30 Flight stat
31 Fire sign?
32 Tax pro
33 Director Howard
36 Engrave
37 Stable enclosures
40 Locales
42 Game sheet info
43 Jung's inner self
44 Jazz genre
45 Bygone fliers
46 Entreaty
48 Physique
49 Undivided
50 Flavor enhancer, for short
51 Actress Arthur

Solution time: 25 mins.

F	A	B		A	V	E	R		S	P	E	W
O	W	E		V	I	L	E		C	E	D	E
B	E	R	N	A	N	K	E		A	R	I	A
		T	O	T		S	V	E	L	T	E	R
R	A	H	R	A	H		E	S	P			
E	L	I		R	I	P		C	E	R	E	S
E	D	N	A		T	A	J		L	E	V	I
K	A	G	A	N		W	A	D		M	E	R
			M	O	M		M	I	C	R	A	S
M	A	R	I	N	E	R		P	A	M		
O	R	E	L		C	U	C	U	M	B	E	R
A	M	A	N		C	H	A	T		C	M	O
T	Y	P	E		A	R	T	Y		R	U	T

Yesterday's answer 3-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kevin Connolly, 47; Matt Lucas, 47; Eva Mendes, 47; Dean Stockwell, 85.

Happy Birthday: Put your energy to good use this year. Idle time will lead to poor decisions. Make use of your attributes, and keep your emotions under control. Keep the peace when dealing with colleagues, relatives and friends. Show discipline, honor and fair play in all you pursue. Work alone, learn all you can and bring about a positive change. Your numbers are 8, 15, 22, 26, 30, 37, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Look at an investment you are considering. A joint venture will not turn out to be what you expect - question who is responsible for what before you get involved in something risky. Don't add to your stress; eliminate unstable situations. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* You'll have some innovative ideas that can quickly spin out of control if you let your emotions intervene. Stick to tried-and-true methods, and eliminate pie-in-the-sky plans that may leave you with the brunt of the responsibilities. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* An open mind will lead to helpful information when in a competitive situation. Reveal little about yourself, and you will maintain the upper hand when it comes to taking advantage of an opportunity. Intelligence will conquer emotional manipulation. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Keep your head screwed on straight when it comes to affairs of the heart. Mixing business with pleasure will lead to trouble if you share personal information with someone at work. Protect your reputation and position. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Approach change with caution. Consider who will benefit most before you commit to anything. Uncertainty is a good enough reason to take a stance and reject a proposition. Invest more time and effort in something that will help you get ahead. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Let your intuition guide you, and you will avoid being taken advantage of by someone with ulterior motives. Put greater emphasis on a healthier lifestyle and keeping up with the trends. Put your needs first for a change. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Put more energy into personal improvement and financial gain. Refuse to let someone railroad you into something that will create problems with a friend, colleague or relative. Make it your priority to achieve economic, mental and physical stability. Strive for perfection. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* A change will be refreshing. Look for safe forms of entertainment that will take your mind off stressful situations. Problems with someone close to you will warrant thought and adjustments to protect your reputation. Offer peace over chaos. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put more trust in you and what you are capable of doing, and less in those who talk big and offer little. An energetic approach to work, educational pursuits and getting along with others will pay off. Set high standards. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Embrace a pastime that boosts your confidence and energy. Physical fitness will play a role in the way you view life, love and future happiness. Don't let what doesn't work bother you; replace a negative attitude with a positive outlook. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take time out to do something you enjoy. Don't make changes to accommodate someone who doesn't do the same for you. Concentrate on mental and physical stimulation that will result in intelligence and good health. Improve your space at home to promote professional productivity. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Think twice before you do something that will cause an uproar. Don't start something you cannot finish. Bide your time, let tempers cool down and consider the best way to maintain a positive outcome. Make peace and love priorities. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are productive, impulsive and hardworking. You are proactive and dynamic. ✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5	9	7			
	9				7		
1						3	
8		3		1			9
9			5				1
3		9		2			4
	5					1	
		6			2		
		2	4	8			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	7	8	9	3	4	2	5	1
4	1	3	7	2	5	6	9	8
9	2	5	6	1	8	7	4	3
8	4	9	1	5	6	3	7	2
7	3	1	2	4	9	8	6	5
2	5	6	3	8	7	9	1	4
5	6	4	8	7	2	1	3	9
3	8	7	5	9	1	4	2	6
1	9	2	4	6	3	5	8	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MOPS AND BROOMS — Solution: 7 letters

P	R	B	L	A	T	I	P	S	O	H	O	U	S	E
L	O	O	U	N	E	L	G	N	A	N	S	N	A	P
A	O	H	O	C	I	T	E	N	I	B	A	C	E	B
S	L	U	S	D	K	A	G	S	T	R	E	E	T	M
T	F	I	T	K	N	E	T	S	U	D	W	T	L	O
I	P	D	A	D	R	I	T	S	R	S	R	B	I	C
C	A	D	E	P	O	O	K	I	N	I	U	L	L	E
F	O	A	M	H	I	O	W	T	D	R	S	O	D	C
D	S	M	H	H	S	U	R	B	C	Y	Ⓣ	I	O	S
R	E	P	P	P	O	L	I	S	H	H	W	Ⓔ	O	P
M	I	C	R	O	F	I	B	E	R	E	T	A	Ⓦ	O
E	E	A	K	R	U	A	B	S	O	R	B	E	D	N
S	Y	M	H	C	N	N	O	I	T	U	L	O	S	G
S	E	R	O	H	C	F	D	T	E	P	R	A	C	E
D	A	E	R	H	T	N	E	V	L	O	S	P	I	N

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Absorb, Angle, Brush, Bucket, Cabinet, Carpet, Chores, Clean, Cloth, Comb, Compound, Damp, Deck, Dirt, Dust, Floor, Foam, Hair, Hanger, Home, Hospital, House, Indoor, Mess, Microfiber, Odor, Oils, Outdoor, Pail, Pans, Plastic, Polish, Porch, Scrub, Shed, Soap, Soft, Solution, Solvent, Spin, Sponge, Spray, Stain, Street, Sweep, Thread, Tidy, Turn, Water, Wet, Wide, Wood, Workshop

Yesterday's Answer: Dining Room

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Harden has triple-double in Houston return; Nets roll

HOUSTON (AP)—The No. 13 on his jersey, James Harden won so many games for the Houston Rockets.

On Wednesday night in the first meeting with his former team, No. 13 had a triple-double for the Brooklyn Nets to send the reeling Rockets to their 13th straight loss.

"A lot of mixed emotions from the fans but I knew that was going to happen," Harden said. "I just wanted to come out here and give them a show."

He did that with 29 points, 10 rebounds and 14 assists in the 132-114 victory. The Nets set a franchise record with their seventh straight road victory. They've won 10 of their last 11 overall.

Harden has meshed well with his new team and the Nets are 17-7 since the trade.

"So far, so good," he said. "It's everything that I signed up for. Top to bottom it's been great."

It's the longest skid for the Rockets, who had just eight players available because of injuries, since they dropped 15 in a row in 2001. They've had a tough time since Harden was traded Jan. 14 and haven't won since Feb. 4.

The Rockets used a 10-0 run, with five points from John Wall, to cut the lead to eight with about eight minutes left in the fourth. But the Nets scored the next eight points, with two 3s from Harden, to extend it to 113-97 midway through the quarter.

It's the eighth triple-double for Harden this season and his second straight after he had 30 points, 14 rebounds and 15 assists without a turnover in an overtime victory at San Antonio on Monday night. He didn't play as clean of a game Wednesday when he had eight turnovers.

Harden got a mixed reception from the crowd. Many of the 3,615 fans booed when he was introduced before the game and more boos came the first few times he touched the ball.

He said it was a "little weird" being on the visitor's side but denied having any extra emotions.

"Once I get on that court I'm just trying to win," he said. "So that was kind of my feeling. I wasn't trying to show off. I wasn't trying to do anything out of the ordinary that I haven't been doing. Just playing my brand of basketball."

AP

Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden (13) prepares to start prior to the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Houston Rockets Wednesday, March 3, 2021, in Houston.

The Rockets played a video showcasing some of the countless highlights of his eight seasons in Houston during a timeout in the first quarter. There were more cheers than boos as it played. Harden stepped out of the huddle and raised his arms before placing his hands in a praying position to acknowledge the fans as it ended.

"You could tell it meant something to him," coach Steve Nash said. "This place is special to James. Houston means a lot to him ... so I know it was a big game for him. I was proud of the way he handled it."

Wall had a season-high 36 points, and Victor Oladipo also set his season high with 33.

Houston coach Stephen Silas said the strong play of those two stars is an encouraging sign amid this difficult stretch.

"It lets us know that when we get back and we're healthy and we're whole and we are in a position where we have enough guys to compete we're going to be just fine," he said.

76ers 131, Jazz 123, OT

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid had 40 points and 19 rebounds and hit a tying 3-pointer late in regulation, and Tobias Harris scored 11 of his 22 points in overtime to lead Philadelphia past Utah in a battle of division leaders.

Ben Simmons added 17 points for the Eastern Conference-leading 76ers.

Donovan Mitchell had 33 points, eight rebounds and six assists in the NBA-leading Jazz's second straight loss. Mitchell was ejected with 30.8 seconds left in overtime after picking up his second technical. He got his first with 57.5 seconds remaining in the extra period after arguing a foul call.

Kings 123, Lakers 120

In Sacramento, Calif., Buddy Hield shook off a sore ankle to score 29 points and Sacramento beat short-handed Los Angeles.

Hield's status for the game was in doubt because of a sprained right ankle but he decided to play through it and helped the Kings win for just the second time in the past 12 games.

They took advantage of a banged-up Lakers team missing LeBron James and Anthony Davis to bounce back from Sunday's late-game collapse against Charlotte when they missed five foul shots in the final 69 seconds to blow an eight-point lead.

Dennis Schroder scored 28 points to lead Los Angeles, Montrezl Harrell added 26 points and Kuzma 25. But it wasn't enough for the Lakers, who lost for the sixth time in eight games to fall into a tie for third place in the Western Conference.

Pacers 114, Cavaliers 111

In Cleveland, T.J. McConnell set an NBA record with nine steals in the first half and had his second career triple-double with 16 points, 13 assists and a franchise-best 10 steals, leading Indiana past Cavaliers.

McConnell was one off the NBA record of 11 steals set San Antonio's Larry Kenon on Dec. 26, 1976, at Kansas City, and matched by New Jersey's Kendall Gill on April 3, 1999, against Miami.

McConnell was 8 of 8 from the field in 36 minutes off the bench, and Malcolm Brogdon scored 27 points to help Indiana snapped a four-game skid. The Pacers overcame a 19-point deficit in the third quarter.

Collin Sexton had 32 points, 10 assists and three steals for Cleveland. The Cavaliers had won four in a row.

Mavericks 87, Thunder 78

In Dallas, Kristaps Porzingis had 19 points and 13 rebounds with European sidekick Luka Doncic sidelined by a back issue going into his second All-Star appearance, and Dallas beat Oklahoma City.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 19 points, Josh Richardson added 16 and Dallas cruised most of the second half without the NBA's sixth-leading scorer.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 15 points for Oklahoma City.

Trail Blazers 108, Warriors 106

In Portland, Ore., Damian Lillard hit a deep 3-pointer with 13.7 seconds left and Portland held off Golden State.

Lillard and Carmelo Anthony each had 22 points for Portland.

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 35 points. The Warriors were without Kelly Oubre Jr. because of a sprained wrist. He was injured in practice Tuesday.

Pistons 129, Raptors 105

In Tampa Bay, Fla., Wayne Ellington scored 25 points and Detroit beat virus-depleted Toronto to snap a three-game losing streak.

Ellington was 8 of 11 from 3-point range and the Pistons were 20 for 41 overall from long range. Detroit's backup had 56 points, with Rodney McGruder and Saben Lee each finishing with 20.

Norman Powell had 36 points for Toronto, and Kyle Lowry added 21 points.

The Raptors played without Pascal Siakam, Fred VanVleet, OG Anunoby, Malachi Flynn and Patrick McCaw because of the NBA's health and safety protocols. Coach Nick Nurse and most of his staff also were held out.

The game was originally scheduled for Tuesday night, but postponed because of the Raptors' COVID outbreak.

Hawks 115, Magic 112

In Orlando, Fla., Trae Young scored 32 points and hit the go-ahead free throws with eight seconds remaining as Atlanta Hawks rallied from 19 down in the second half to beat Orlando.

Atlanta made 9 of 13 on 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and 21 of 45 in the game to complete their biggest comeback of the season.

Atlanta improved to 2-0 under interim coach Nate McMillan and won consecutive games for the first time in 5 1/2 weeks. McMillan took over Monday when Lloyd Pierce was fired.

Nikola Vucevic had 29 points and nine rebounds for Orlando.

Bulls 128, Pelicans 124

In New Orleans, Zach LaVine capped a 36-point performance with a driving layup and four free throws during the final minute, and Chicago held off New Orleans.

Coby White scored 25 points for the Bulls. They led by many as 19 and were still up 18 in the fourth quarter before the Pelicans' late surge pulled them as close as 117-113 on Jaxson Hayes alley-oop dunk as he was fouled with 1:49 left.

Zion Williamson led the Pelicans with 28 points.

Hornets 135, Timberwolves 102

In Minneapolis, Terry Rozier scored 31 points, Gordon Hayward added 23 and Charlotte headed into the All-Star break with an easy victory over Minnesota.

The Hornets have alternated wins and losses for the past 11 games, with the victory coming after a loss Monday night at Portland.

The Timberwolves have lost nine in a row and 13 of 14. Minnesota is 0-5 since Chris Finch replaced Ryan Saunders as coach.

Source: NBA set to remove restriction on 2-way deals

MIAMI (AP)—The NBA has moved closer to a deal where players on two-way contracts would be eligible to appear on the active roster for as many games as their teams would like this season, a person with knowledge of the situation said Tuesday.

The proposal to lift what was a 50-game limit on the active roster for two-way players got overwhelming support Tuesday and is likely to be passed by the NBA's board of governors, said the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because that final approval is pending. The approval is expected later this month.

No team has used two-ways more this season than Miami, with Gabe Vincent and Max Strus having a combined 42 appearances this season entering Tuesday's game against Atlanta. Vincent has also been a part-time starter for the Heat, and Miami was one of the teams concerned that those 50-game appearance limits on the active roster was fast approaching.

"We all appreciate that they see that each team is in a different place," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We felt that we've competed in this season with great honor and respect to the league. ... Our two-ways are playing for us. There are a few other teams that are in that circumstance. It's just an uneven and unpredictable year for so many teams. Not even all the teams are in the same range of amount of games played up to this point, with all the postponements."

The NBA relaxed the rule on two-way players for this season in anticipation of postponements and rosters being taxed by virus-related issues. The rule in past years has been that two-way players could spend 45 days with the NBA club and the rest of the time with a franchise's G League team. But with a shortened G League season this year, and not all teams having clubs in that league this season, there were obvious reasons to change things.

Players on two-way deals are earning $449,155 this season.

"It just makes all the sense in the world to not have to even think about that or concern yourself with days, particularly when we are playing them," Spoelstra said of the looming change. "It's what's fair to the teams. It's what makes the most sense and is fair to the players. We are just glad that it was seen that way, objectively, because not everybody is in the same circumstance."

Yankees manager Aaron Boone gets pacemaker, takes leave

AP
This is a Feb. 24, 2021, photo showing Aaron Boone of the New York Yankees baseball team. The New York Yankees announced Wednesday, March 3, 2021, that manager Aaron Boone is taking an immediate medical leave of absence to receive a pacemaker.

NEW YORK (AP)—Yankees manager Aaron Boone took a leave of absence from the team to get a pacemaker and intends to return to work in a few days.

New York said the procedure took place Wednesday at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, Florida, and went as expected. Boone remained hospitalized overnight.

"It sounds like it's going to be a short-term thing," general manager Brian Cashman said. "I do applaud him for being very open and honest and sharing about the circumstances that he's going through right now."

Bench coach Carlos Mendoza took over as acting manager for Wednesday night's exhibition, a 4-1 win over Toronto in Tampa.

"I was told that he's recovering well, that everything went as planned," Mendoza said.

The 41-year-old Mendoza was a minor leaguer mostly with San Francisco and the Yankees from 1997-09 and is starting his 13th season working for the Yankees.

Mendoza joined the major league staff as quality control and infield coach under Boone in 2018 and succeeded Josh Bard as bench coach for 2020.

"The mindset doesn't change," Mendoza said. "We have a really good group of coaches here and really good personnel that are going to continue to get these guys ready to play the regular season."

Boone, 47, is entering his fourth season as Yankees manager. Cashman said Boone told him a few days ago he intended to have the pacemaker inserted whenever the surgery could be scheduled.

Boone said in a statement the medical team is "confident that today's surgery will allow me to resume all of my usual professional and personal activities and afford me a positive long-term health prognosis without having to change anything about my way of life. I look forward to getting back to work in the next several days."

New York started the exhibition season Sunday, and Boone informed the Yankees staff from the hospital during Wednesday's daily staff Zoom call that he was having the procedure later in the day. Mendoza said Boone was smiling and joking during the call.

Boone recorded a video that was given to players during a second Zoom after Mendoza and third base coach Phil Nevin spoke.

"He just wanted them to continue to get our work in, continue to do (things) the right way, the same way we've been doing here, and that made all of us feel a lot better," Mendoza said.

Brett Gardner, the Yankees' senior player, said the video helped comfort players. Gardner said Boone had mentioned a few days ago when passing in a hallway that he was feeling tired.

"I think it was a shock to most of us," Gardner said. "I think his first concern was making sure that we would continue to go about our business the right way with him being gone and, obviously, to kind of ease our minds that we weren't too overly concerned about him and this procedure."

Cashman said Boone could return to the team in two to three days.

"As many of you know, I underwent open-heart surgery in 2009, and I wanted everyone to understand where I'm at regarding the procedure that's taking place today," Boone said in his statement. "Over the last six to eight weeks I've had mild symptoms of lightheadedness, low energy and shortness of breath. As a result, I underwent a series of tests and examinations in New York prior to the beginning of spring training, including multiple visits with a team of heart specialists. While the heart checkup came back normal, there were indications of a low heart rate which, after further consultations with doctors in Tampa, necessitates a pacemaker."

Boone said "my faith is strong, and my spirits are high. I'm in a great frame of mind."

"During my short-term absence, I have complete trust that our coaches, staff and players will continue their training and preparation at the same level as we've had and without any interruption," he said.

Boone was a third baseman and first baseman in the major leagues from 1997-2009. He was an All-Star for the Cincinnati Reds in 2003 shortly before getting traded to the Yankees. Later that year, his 11th-inning home run off Boston's Tim Wakefield in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series won the pennant for New York.

Boone is a third-generation major leaguer whose grandfather Gus, father Bob and brother Bret also played in the big leagues and whose nephew Jake is a minor leaguer in the Washington organization.

A broadcaster for ESPN from 2010-17, Boone succeeded Joe Girardi as New York manager ahead of the 2018 season. He has led the Yankees to a 236-148 record.

"I am confident that Boonie's in a good place, he's in great hands and he'll be back before we know it," Cashman said. "And I'd say a newer version of himself. And the previous version was good enough, but obviously he'll be in a better health situation."

Antonetti says Indians cooperating with Callaway inquiry

CLEVELAND (AP)—Indians president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti said Wednesday he couldn't comment on his previous remarks about Mickey Callaway's conduct due to Major League Baseball's ongoing investigation into sexual harassment allegations against the team's former pitching coach.

Antonetti joined Terry Francona for the manager's Zoom availability from training camp in Arizona, a day after a story by The Athletic said several former Indians employees had come forward in the last month to say the team's front office was aware of Callaway's behavior.

The unidentified employees responded to Antonetti's public comments on Feb. 4 that he didn't know about Callaway's lewd actions until he read a previous Athletic story.

At the time, Antonetti said "there had never been any complaints against Mickey in his time with us, either to me or to our human resources department or other leaders."

Antonetti was asked Wednesday if he stood by his earlier comments.

"I very much want to answer that," he said. "At this point I'm not able to. The last time we talked, the investigation had not yet started, so I had more latitude with what I was able to share. With the ongoing investigation, the most important thing is that the investigation is able to maintain its integrity, its thoroughness, its impartiality.

"And I don't want to do anything that would jeopardize that investigation. As importantly, we look forward to learning what that investigation reveals so we can make sure that we address everything in totality and not in piecemeal.

On Tuesday, Francona said there was no deliberate attempt to cover up for Callaway, who was with the Indians from 2010-17 — serving as the pitching coach for five years — before he being hired as manager of the New York Mets.

Callaway has been suspended as the Los Angeles Angels pitching coach, pending the outcome of MLB's investigation.

Antonetti said he should have been the one to deliver the team's message on Tuesday, and not Francona. He reiterated the team is "fully cooperating with the investigation."

In the most recent story, the husband of a woman who had an extramarital affair with Callaway contacted the Indians multiple times to complain about his behavior in 2017. Callaway told The Athletic that "any relationship in which I was engaged has been consensual, and my conduct was in no way intended to be disrespectful to any women involved."

One Indians employee told The Athletic that Callaway's behavior was "the worst-kept secret in the organization."

Antonetti, who has been with Cleveland's organization since 1999, said the team has already taken steps to "building an inclusive culture."

Nationals say lefty Jon Lester to have thyroid gland removed

Washington Nationals left-hander Jon Lester is leaving spring training camp to have surgery for the removal of his thyroid gland, manager Dave Martinez said Wednesday.

The 37-year-old Lester was to travel from West Palm Beach, Florida, to New York on Wednesday; the Nationals said the operation is planned for Friday.

"Hopefully he can pitch again in about a week," Martinez said in a video conference with reporters before Washington's exhibition game against the Miami Marlins. "We want him to get it taken care of now, so it's not an issue."

Martinez said the Nationals "still have plans, as of right now, that he will start the season with us on his scheduled day, but we'll have to see—after this procedure's done—how he's feeling."

In 2006, Lester's rookie season with the Boston Red Sox ended early because he was diagnosed with a form of lymphoma.

He underwent chemotherapy treatments and returned to the Red Sox at spring training before the following season.

Lester is entering his 16th year in the majors and first with Washington. He was a free agent and joined the Nationals on a $5 million, one-year contract after playing the past six seasons with the Chicago Cubs.

The starting pitcher originally was scheduled to make his first appearance for Washington in a Grapefruit League game Thursday.

But Martinez said that after additional test results came in, a decision was made Tuesday for Lester to have the surgery.

He said Lester had been feeling tired.

"That's the big issue. I feel like once they get this out, he'll have a lot more energy throughout the day," the manager said. "I hope it works out for him. I really do. He's a big part of what we do here and we love having him. He's been working his tail off, day in and day out, and I know he's going to help us."

Washington added Lester to a star-studded rotation that already included three-time Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer, 2019 World Series MVP Stephen Strasburg and lefty Patrick Corbin.

Vikings GM: 'Kirk Cousins is our quarterback'

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The quarterback carousel has begun to spin around the NFL for the second straight offseason, with even the slight potential of further movement creating a flurry of speculation about who will man these vital positions for certain teams once the cuts, signings and trades are settled.

The Minnesota Vikings don't plan to put Kirk Cousins on the ride, according to general manager Rick Spielman in comments made Wednesday.

"Kirk Cousins is our quarterback. I know there's a lot of rumors floating around out there, but Kirk Cousins is our quarterback. We felt that he played very well, probably the best that he's ever played down that stretch last year," Spielman said on a video conference call with reporters, his first media availability regarding the roster since the season ended.

"Kirk is our quarterback going forward, and I look forward to him with another year in this system. I'm excited for him and what he's going to bring to our team next year."

Cousins, who had a career-high 35 touchdown passes in 2020, will count $31 million against the salary cap in 2021.

AP

In this Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021 file photo, Minnesota Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions in Detroit.

His $35 million salary for 2022 will fully guarantee on March 19 if he remains on the roster, bringing his cap number for next year to a whopping $45 million.

The cap hit that the Vikings would incur for releasing — or, to a lesser extent, trading — Cousins would seem to preclude a move. The Detroit Lions, however, have already agreed to trade Matthew Stafford to the Los Angeles Rams for Jared Goff.

The Philadelphia Eagles have reached a deal with the Indianapolis Colts to send them Carson Wentz. In those cases at least, the dead money that lands on a team's cap from remaining bonus prorations for departing players did not ultimately prove to be prohibitive for such high-profile swaps.

If the Vikings actually were to be open to moving on from Cousins, who first signed with them in 2018, the public statements Wednesday by Spielman would be the natural stance to take in the game of poker that's usually required with such negotiations.

Spielman, of course, said a year ago that there was no reason to "anticipate that Stefon Diggs is not going to be a Minnesota Viking" before trading him to the Buffalo Bills roughly three weeks later. In 2013, Spielman said he had "no intent to trade Percy Harvin" about a month before dealing him to the Seattle Seahawks.

What's most certain about the rest of the offseason for the Vikings is more proven players being let go to create space under the salary cap that tightened for 2021 after lost league-wide revenues during the pandemic-altered 2020 season. Tight end Kyle Rudolph, the longest-tenured player on the roster and the fifth-leading receiver in team history, was the first to go.

"We're going to have to be very creative this year," Spielman said. "We're going to have to make a lot of tough business decisions."

TANHOLDINGS

From Page 24

rero, but Tan Holding proved to be too much. Oliver Fajardo contributed a goal in the 68th minute.

In Division B game, Matansa pummeled Island Star behind Rakib Hassan's four goals with contributions from Jacob Arkoh, Leo Medora, and Gabriel Arkoh Jr. each hitting the back of the net once.

Island Star held the lead in the first 16 minutes of the match with ZericNew Grant making the first goal in the fourth minute followed by another in the ninth minute from Wei Ping Chen.

In the 13th minute of the match, Mantansa's Gabriel Arkoh scored a goal for Island Star followed by a goal from Hyung Jin Kim in the 16th minute.

Matansa picked up the pace in the 39th minute with a goal from Jacob Arkoh. Hassan made it rain with four consecutive goals in the 42th, 44th, 57th, and 73rd minute to secure the win for Matansa. Medora and Gabriel Arkoh Jr. delivered the final goals.

DIVISION A
Paire 5, The One 0

Paire also bested The One in their match last Sunday behind Eric Barajas' three goals with help from Chris Nelson who added two.

U18 NT A 3, Kanoa 0

The U18 A defeated Kanoa in their match up. U18 A's Markus Toves led the way with two goals while Aloy Angeles contributed one.

MP United 6, Old B Bank 0

MP United topped Old B Bank with Razeff Altamirano and J.M. Rojas contributing two goals apiece to lead their team to victory. Alex Park and Yoshi Mafnas each landed one goal apiece.

DIVISION B
Saipan United 1, Shirley's 0

Saipan United's George Shokarev drilled the lone goal to carry his team to victory in their matchup last Tuesday. Shokarev scored the only goal of the game in the 47th minute.

Bangladesh FC 5, Women's NT 1

Md. Titu Ahmed and Md. Soheal Akanda led the way for Bangladesh's win over the Women's National Team with two goals apiece with Mohammad Hossain adding another goal for insurance. Jannah Casarino scored the only goal for the Women's National Team in the 63rd minute of the match last Thursday.

Lady Rollers earn lopsided win

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Lady Rollers hammered Rollers White, 43-21, to coast to victory during their match of the 2021 NMI RBA Spring Madness league last Friday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

The Lady Rollers took an easy win over Rollers White in the U14 and U17 co-ed caging last Friday. Shanesse Aldan led the way with 18 points with help from Kaia Travilla and Marianne Cayetano adding 6 points each. Fiona Bucalig also added 5 points, while Stephanie put up 4. Kyna and Tasi Ramon each scored 2 apiece.

The Lady Rollers held a big lead from the start making 13 of its points in the first half of the match. Aldan made 10 of her points in the second half to secure the win for her team.

Rollers White's Onick Ragbonshe carried the team with his 8 points with help from Kyrell who added 5 points.

U11
Rollers White 24, Rollers Black 22

Rollers Black edged Rollers white in their matchup last Sunday. Dave Apatang Jr. led the way with 9 points with help from Payton Pagelinan who contributed 7 points.

U14
Rollers Black 52, O'laces 26

Rollers Black also won their match against Ol'Aces. Rollers Black's Lance Lerio and Christian Lucero carried the team to victory with 14 points apiece with help from Eros Estolas who added 11.

U17
Kagman 43, Rollers White 36

The Kagman Rollers took a close win against Rollers White with Reida Teregeyo and Darren both contributing 15 points.

HotShots 34, Rollers White 27

The HotShots prevailed in their match against Rollers White. Sean Garcia carried HotShots to victory with 19 points.

U19
Rollers Black 57, Sonics 37

Rollers Black pummeled Sonics. Anthony Laraja led the way and secured the win for Rollers Black with 11 points.

SIS

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ian Middle School next with TMS facing the same fate as all of SIS 1's previous opponents with SIS 1 hammering the team, 21-10. SIS 1 then closed off the first round with a match against SIS 2. SIS 1 showed no mercy, conquering their sister-team 21-11.

Hopwood, meanwhile, triumphed over all its opponents not named SIS 1. In the match against DMS 2, Hopwood pounded its opponent 21-8. Hopwood came head-to-head against Francisco M. Sablan Middle School 1 and came out victorious with a win of 21-11. Hopwood then dominated ChaCha, 21-3.

Hopwood then went up against ACS and trounced them, 21-11. In its final match of the kick-off games last Monday, Hopwood came up against SIS 2 and bested them, 21-11.

ACS tied for Top 3 after topping four of its six opponents. ACS first defeated DMS 2, 21-6, before outclassing FMS 2, 21-10. ACS then beat GCA 2, 21-17, before crushing ChaCha, 21-8.

TMS, which is also vying for the Top 3, hammered Mount Carmel School, 21-0, then moved on to defeat SIS 2, 21-10. TMS also went up against GCA 2 and prevailed, 21-18. TMS also faced GCA 1, overpowering them, 21-16.

The second round of the league, organized by the Public School System Student Support Services Athletic Program, is scheduled this Monday at the CPA Airport Field.

MANAGING

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think going on some sort of cleanse or restart can help move things along.

A: A diet is arguably a means to an end. Still, it does behoove you to adopt useful habits along the way—because after all, as cringe as it may sound, it is a lifestyle. It's one thing to hop on a rigid approach for 30 days and see modest improvements in your body composition. Sticking to a program and establishing sound dietary habits is a different story.

That's the hard truth. Meaningful, visible progress is going to take a lot longer than you want.

Don't take this lightly. If you want to build something that'll last, it's not going to be attained with crash diets and bogus juice cleanses. Understand that creating good habits and establishing behaviors are arguably more critical than the outcome.

Harden has triple-double in Houston return, Nets roll

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Sports

Yankees manager Aaron Boone gets pacemaker, takes leave

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TanHoldings, Matansa conquer foes

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
TanHoldings Football Club coasted to victory in its matchup against NMI Boys U18 National Team last Sunday in the M-League Spring 2021 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Matansa Football Club triumphed over Island Star FC during their match in the M-League Spring 2021 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

TanHoldings Football Club and Matansa FC are off to a strong start in the M-League Spring 2021 season after dominating their opponents in their respective debuts at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

TanHoldings topped the first game in Division A last Sunday against NMI Boys U18 National Team, 6-2, while Matansa hammered Island Star FC, 7-4, to claim victory in the Division B game last Saturday.

TanHoldings kicked off the season on a high note with Jacob Montes scoring the first goal in the ninth minute of the match followed by another goal in the 20th minute from Joshua Mendez. Martin Jambor and Mark Esalan carried Tan Holding with two goals apiece

NMI U18 tried to pick up momentum in the 23rd minute with a goal from Ruben Guer-

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SIS 1 takes top seed in grass v-ball

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Saipan International School 1 took the top seed after sweeping all its games as the 2021 Co-ed Middle School Grass Volleyball League kicked off last Monday at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Airport Field.

SIS 1 is followed in the team standings by Hopwood Middle School who holds a win-loss standing of 5-1 after the first round. Tied for the No. 3 spot in the overall standings are Agape Christian School and Tinian Middle School, both holding 4-2 records.

In its first game last Monday, SIS 1 went head-to-head against ChaCha Oceanview Middle School. SIS 1 overpowered its foe, 21-11. SIS 1 moved on to face Hopwood Middle School beating them, 21-17. SIS 1 later faced Dan-Dan Middle School 2 and gained an easy 21-7 victory.

SIS 1 then faced off against Grace Christian Academy 1 and nipped the latter, 21-10. SIS 1 crossed paths with Tin-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan International School claimed the top seed after winning all six games in the kick off of the 2021 Public School System Interscholastic Co-ed Middle School Grass Volleyball League held at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Airport Field last Monday.

Ask DRE:

By DRE DELOS SANTOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Dre Delos Santos writes about fitness and nutrition for Saipan Tribune *and* TAGA Sports. *He is a personal trainer at Gold's Gym. He is featured on fitness sites such as Weight Watchers, T-Nation, and STACK.*

Managing your food intake and meaningful progress

My son was born a few weeks ago, and I'm just now beginning to realize how sleep deprivation can impact your day to day. I've harped on the importance of rest and recovery, but it dawned on me that the level of empathy I have for my clients who have kids and a full-time job could've been better.

Interestingly, despite being a walking zombie, I have a newfound level of energy. Okay—perhaps the ungodly amount of coffee I've been guzzling has something to do with that.

Q: Do I have to count calories?

A: It goes without saying that in your pursuit to becoming healthier and in better shape, there has to be a degree of restraint. In other words, getting your diet on point is a major tenet you can't sweep under the rug.

Counting calories is one way that can be carried out. It's very helpful in auditing your food intake. Now, does this mean you absolutely have to do that? No. For some it can be a huge pain in the butt, and in some cases could potentially create an unhealthy relationship with food.

Another option would be to simply engage in making small changes such as eliminating daily snacking, and mitigating alcohol. I'd even argue being diligent with that coupled with daily walking can do wonders. Preparing your meals, and minding your portions instead of always getting takeout can make a big difference as well.

What I'm trying to convey here is: what you choose to adopt is entirely up to you. Perhaps, a blend that makes practical sense for you. You don't have to subject yourself to just one method.

There are a variety of ways to do this dance. Just know what works for you may not necessarily jive well with others.

Q: I've been working out for a few weeks now, but I'm just not seeing results. In fact, I think I've gained some weight. This is why I

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